
HOLY WRIT

FAMILIARIZED TO

JUVENILE CONCEPTIONS.

ТИЯ УДОН

от автора

ДАЧНЫЕ СОЧИЕНИЯ

FRONTISPICE.



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Barker sculp

Wisdom illuminating the page of Instruction

Published as the Act directs, by M. A. Neilan, Janst 1^o 1790.

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HOLY WRIT

FAMILIARIZED TO

JUVENILE CONCEPTIONS.

IN A SERIES OF

PATHETIC STORIES,

AND

AFFECTING DIALOGUES:

COMPRISING

THE EVENTS OF TIME,

AS TOLD IN SCRIPTURE, FROM THE FIRST
OF THINGS, TO THE ESTABLISH-
MENT OF CHRISTIANITY.

AN ORIGINAL WORK.

BY THE REV. MARK ANTHONY MEILAN.

VOL. I.

NIL DICTU FÆDUM AUT VISU, HÆC LIMINA TANGAT
INTRA QUÆ PUER EST. JUVENAL.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED BY W. WILSON, AVE-MARIA-LANE,
FOR T. HOOKHAM, IN NEW BOND-STREET, AND
T. LONGMAN, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1791.

4

THE BRITISH



DEDICATION.

THE RIGHT REVEREND
BEILBY,
LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.
MY LORD,

YOUR Condescension in accepting my last Work, entitled SERMONS FOR CHILDREN, induces me to put THIS likewise under the Protection of your Lordship's NAME; happy if I shall be thought, at least, an indefatigable Labourer in the Vineyard of Instruction. My Intention, I persuade myself, is laudable; and I could wish my Talents were proportioned to the arduous Under-

taking I have entered on. In such Case, I might hope that my benevolent Subscribers (all within a very narrow Circle), would behold their friendly Efforts seconded by Readers (through the Realm at large), who, not connected with the Author, and desiring only to possess a Work that ALL speak well of, could not fail, by such Means, to assist a Family dependant on his Toil for their Establishment in Life. **HINC ILLÆ LACRYMÆ**, may, therefore, be my Motto from a Heathen Writer. Oh that I could add thereto, as he does, **ET MORTALIA PECTORA TANGUNT!**

I am, my **LORD,**

Your **LORDSHIP'S**

Most respectful,

And obedient Servant,

M. A. MEILAN.

Dartmouth-Street, Westminster,

January 21, 1791.

PREFACE.

P R E F A C E.

TO those obliging individuals who have little ones themselves, or who approve of every effort to facilitate their path in useful knowledge by amusing them; the author, who, for thirty years last past, has been continually conversant in labours for the welfare of a rising generation, will not stand in need of any great apologies for this original design, to recommend the reading of God's word. They will, with their accustomed candour and benevolence, admit the author's good intentions in this undertaking, as sufficient to excuse that poverty of execution, which, he fears, will be a striking feature in too many pages of the following work.

He has however undertaken and accomplished it. Accordingly, it is presented to the public; and a brief description of the author's view in such a work will hardly be considered out of place.

It is designed to put the several historic parts of that **GOOD BOOK**, on which the author has

employed himself, into a dress which children love. The general unfitness of the sacred Scriptures as a reading book for those of tender understanding, is almost proverbial. Notwithstanding which, it may be noted, that no book is half so full of matter, speaking to the passions of mankind. Of this assertion, on the author's part, the history of Joseph and his brothers ; that of Samson, who, in consequence of filial disobedience, came to have his eyes put out ; the affecting piety of Ruth ; the grief of David for the child he was deprived of, owing to his murder of Uriah, and adultery perpetrated with Bathsheba : the unhappy fate of Absalom : the judgment of king Solomon between the harlots ; Tobit's history ; the patriotic heroism of the widow Judith ; the untimely death of those seven children and their mother, who all suffered in Antiochus's time ; the murder of the Innocents ; the parable or fable of the prodigal reformed ; the death of Jesus Christ, and other parts of Holy Writ ;— all these are proofs how powerfully speak the Holy Scriptures to our hearts ; for they are histories that work on every one perusing them. Why therefore should not all the parts of such a book have similar attractions ? What can be the reason, but that being blended with a mass of

of matter, foreign to the purpose, they fatigue the youthful understanding; so that children, whose attention should be kept continually fixed upon the subject, by the mode of treating it, soon fling away the book, disgusted with the matter they are reading, when the manner of the writer disappoints them.

Hence the reader will discern, that the intention of this manual is not to deliver any of the doctrine holy writ contains, except those instances, wherein the action spoken of supplies a precept here and there. On this account, the Psalms, the Proverbs, all the inferior Prophets, and the several epistles of St. Paul, &c. with the Revelations, are not of a kind for introduction here. It is the actions only spoken of in scripture that have place. And as in those, it would not have been possible, or proper, to bring forward many miracles, as objects for the eye, such as the Deity's appearance, and the punishment of Ananias and Sapphira for their lie, the author has considered it not unadvisable to substitute an Angel for the Deity, or represent the miracle in narrative. The rest, as for example's sake, where Moses, at Mount Horeb, puts his hand into his breast, and cannot pull it out again, as also where he sees the Mount on fire at such a distance as the eye of

the supposed spectator is not understood to reach: and where St. Paul, upon the prayer of Ananias, has his sight restored,—these miracles, and others like them, are not of a nature to offend religion by displaying them, and therefore has the author put them, as it were, before the eye of those invited to his scenic exhibitions.

Neither will this work yield any *pabulum*, or food, to exercise the tooth of criticism. This is not intended as a deprecation to assuage the wrath of those who arrogate the monthly office of examining into the merits and defects of every author, on whatever subject he thinks fit to write, though he has much more knowledge than themselves. From such a quarter he has nothing but abuse * to look for; but his consolation,

* And yet the specimen of a performance, which he published seventeen years ago, without a name prefixed thereto, was fortunate enough to gain the following character.

“ Although” [remarks the Critical Review for July 1773] “ the beautiful style of Fenelon leaves little room for regretting that he has not embellished the adventures of his hero [Télémaque] with poetical measure; those who are desirous of seeing that admired production in a dress, in which its comparative merit, respecting the epic poems of Virgil and Homer, may be more easily ascertained, will undoubtedly receive pleasure from perusing the translation now before us. This specimen of the work is justly entitled to approbation: though the translator has subjected his author to the fettters of rhyme, he has trans-
fused

solation, in the first place, is, that others infinitely more deserving honour and respect than he can be, have found themselves exposed to their scurrillity †; and in the next place, that the censure of such characters, as thrust themselves without authority into an office, and by doing every thing in secret, show they are at least afraid of consequences, or ashamed of what they are concerned in,—that the censure of such men, he says, is real praise. His motive in declaring, that the work thus laid before the public, should not be considered as an object fit for criticism, is an humble plea to the indulgence of that public, for whose use he writes, or rather for the use of those, they look on as so near and dear to them. Throughout the whole performance, every thing is taken in the obvious sense. In short, the story of God's people is delivered faithfully from the creation of the world, beginning at the first of Genesis, and ending with the Acts of the Apostles, when the faith of Jesus was established.

fused his spirit with undiminished grace and energy, if he has not even heightened the beauty of the original, by the harmony of verse."

† He does not mean to include the Monthly Review in this censure.

Of

Of the several articles that constitute this work, those few referring to such circumstances and events as are diffused; and, which admitted not of unity in point of time and place, as dramatists express themselves, are thrown into a narrative. The rest are either wholly dialogue, or dialogue and narrative together: but of this last kind, there are but few, because the author meant, as he has said already, to set forth the best book extant, in a dress that might allure the understanding of a rising generation to consider or contemplate on it, from the pleasure they received by doing so: and in his judgment nothing was more likely to effect this purpose, than an exhibition of the several histories it contains, in such a form as to produce dramatical effect. And yet this could not universally be done. The author, notwithstanding, hopes that those who may approve this novel mode of recommending the perusal of the Scriptures to young minds, will not consider those mere narratives, the work contains, as very numerous, in comparison with the remainder; or provided they regret there should be any, he assures them he was under the necessity of introducing such, for want of talents or capacity to set them forth in any other form. And this concession will, he hopes, induce their candor to connive at the appearance

appearance of such pieces, as are less adapted than the rest to please.

He dwells upon this circumstance more fully, than perhaps might be expected of him, from a perfect and entire conviction, that the generality of what are called **DIDACTIC** subjects, would be more effectually inculcated in youthful minds, if men of talents and abilities for such an undertaking, would apply themselves to draw up their instructions in a form that should possess the double charm of plot and dialogue, that so the imagination and affections of the youthful reader might be interested, and the memory aided, while the mind was gleaning knowledge. As a proof with what success the business of instruction might be carried on, if such a medium for conveyance were struck out, let it be only noted what adepts in history, as far as history is represented on the stage, those are, who see old times brought back in scenic exhibitions. The transactions of our **Henries** being so agreeably displayed by Shakespeare, are retained with ease by those who see them represented at the play-house; and the same might be advanced respecting many periods of the Greek and Roman states, which have already furnished matter for the tragic muse.

The

The author of the following publication, therefore, hopes, that let its merits be whatever circumstances may determine, he shall be excused in consequence of his design, which is to please and benefit the rising generation. Hitherto, his pen has never been employed to vilify the character, or hurt the peace of any one ; and as in this, he has evinced a disposition which malevolence has never warped, so likewise as a writer, he has always shunned the rock of pride ; and his humility has soared no higher than the wish of being useful to the younger part of those he lives with. To conclude ; there never was, perhaps, a work, that could with more propriety exhibit the inscription on its title page :

Nil dictu fœdum aut visu, hæc limina tangat
Intra quæ puer est.

The author places his reliance on that circumstance, in recommending, as he does, his present labours to the public.

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HOLY

from position over our doubts, and maintained
bisized just enough to H . and ratio of man
and woman, and the interval on
the one side, and the interval on
the other, so as to give just time to each
man.

FAMILIARIZED TO

HOLY WRIT JUVENILE CONCEPTIONS.

THE FIRST AGE OF THE WORLD.

ARTICLE I.

PARADISE LOST, b. iv. l. 412.

*ADAM and EVE in Paradise.

BEFORE CHRIST 4004.

ADAM.

YES, yes, beloved spouse: the power that
made us must indeed be infinitely good;
for of the dust he formed us, and has fixed our
habitation

* The six first pieces of the work, here laid before the public, are (with some few alterations which were necessary to accommodate them to the present plan) extracted out of Milton, and the Author thought he could not enter on his own design, comprising such a vast variety of subjects, under better auspices than those of such a writer. Nothing more than this is necessary

2 ADAM AND EVE IN PARADISE.

habitation here, though we have nothing in return to offer him. He, therefore, that has laid no law excepting this upon us, not to touch the tree of knowledge both of good and evil, while the rest are for our use and service, is entitled to a cheerful tribute of obedience from us. Let not then this single prohibition raise one murmur in our hearts, but let us magnify his praise, while we employ ourselves from day to day in this delightful place.

Eve. Oh Adam, we must be indeed eternally indebted to our Maker, who has so continually blessed us from our very first existence. I remember not at what one period of my being, to the present moment, I have been without his comforts ; for to speak of what I felt within me when my life had its beginning, I well recollect the day when I awoke from sleep, and found myself reposed upon a bank of flowers. I wondered where I was, and knew not what I should account myself. At no great distance I discerned

for the reader's information, who will judge himself, by the continuance of the work, if this selection from another author has originated from the motive just now mentioned, or from incapacity to furnish any thing upon the subject, written by himself. These extracts are not meant to be obtruded frequently. Indeed, the Author, notwithstanding he has made considerable progress in the work, has no design to borrow any further from another pen, excepting, as the reader will observe, the matter of the 10th and following article.

there

there was a lake of water : To that lake I went ; and, looking down, methought another sky appeared below.

Adam. Yes ; you have often told me so.

Eve. Let me continue still to tell it ; since the recollection of what then I felt is so delightful.— As I stooped to look into the lake, another creature stooped (I thought) to look at me. I started back ; and so too did the image. I returned, and found it like myself, returning too. I was astonished at the sight ; when lo, a voice—but whence I knew not—thus addressed me, “ What “ thou seest in the lake is nothing ; or if any “ thing, it is the shadow of thyself : but follow “ me, and I will bring thee where no shadow “ waits thy coming.”—

Adam. Peace, break off, dear Eve ; for look, the glorious shape that deigns so frequently to visit our abode, is once again approaching. He will therefore condescend, as usual, to continue with us till the close of day. Go, therefore, and make preparation of your stores. I will walk forth, and meet him on the way, and you may easily discover where we are. He comes ; make haste.

Eve. Yes, I will haste indeed, and bring such plenty for his entertainment, that no doubt, as he is wont to do, he shall confess the Almighty has not with less liberality diffused his bounty here,

than he has done in heaven. I go ; but will be back with speed.

Adam. With too much speed you cannot possibly rejoin us ; for already is he here, and hardly have I time enough to frame fit words for his reception : But what need of previous study, when such reverence is within my heart ? I go to meet him.

II.

PARADISE LOST, b. v. l. 363.

THE REVOLT IN HEAVEN.

BEFORE CHRIST 4004.

SCENE. *A spot adjacent to the former.*

RAPHAEL and ADAM.

ADAM.

WELCOME celestial visitor ; and since you have vouchsafed once more to leave the abodes of Paradise above, that you might honour this, be still more condescending ; and, as always you are used, pass with us the remainder of the day, partaking what the garden will afford.

Raphael. Yes, Adam ; and to do so, am I come. Lead then before me to your bower.

Adam.

Adam. Not so, my Lord ; since here, where we are standing, can we entertain you ; for behold, with how much diligence has my beloved Eve made preparation for us. (*To Eve coming in.*) Oh well done, my fair one, my beloved ! place here whatever you have brought : this turf shall be our table, and this mossy bank our seat. Once more, beloved Eve, well done ! for till this moment, never did I notice in you such alacrity. Sit therefore now, great guest, and taste these fruits which God provides for our support. But that you have already been partaker with us, I should think our food were little suited to please heavenly palates, notwithstanding one great Father gives all beings in the world whatever they enjoy.

Raphael. Ahd therefore think not but as frequently before, I have partaken with you of the fruits that grow for your subsistence in this Paradise, so now I taste with pleasure those good things your hospitable partner has brought forth. For so much hospitality, hail mother of mankind from whom are to proceed those numerous generations that shall fill the world ! See with what appetite I eat, not sparing the repast ; for notwithstanding heaven has its peculiar fruits, yet those the earth produces are not unacceptable. Then wonder not if what the Almighty has bestowed on *you* for food, I likewise

take as such. The time may come, if only ye remain obedient, when your nature will become like ours: till when, be sensible of the Almighty's love, and gratefully partake of those good things your Paradise affords.

Adam. Well have you cautioned us, great guest. But what might that condition mean—if only ye remain obedient? Can we possibly prove disobedient to that God who hath bestowed so much upon us?

Eve. Or not pay him even more obedience than he looks for at our hands?

Raphael. Attend, and be instructed; for, at present, to instruct you am I come.—That in this Paradise you are so happy is God's gift; that you continue happy, will depend upon yourselves. The service *HE* expects is voluntary, and not forced; for what desert can any one make boast of, who does only what he *must*. The angelic host themselves would not be happy, were they disobedient. By obedience we all stand, though some, alas! are fallen.

Adam. Is it possible? Have they renounced that faith they owed their Maker? I, for my part, know we were created to obey or disobey as we think fit; and were it not for these last words, should be assured I never could depart from my obedience; but these tidings raise some doubt within me.

Eve.

Eve. And some wish, if you but so far descend, to know what could prevail upon them to revolt.

Raphael. Your wish shall be vouchsafed ; for to relate it am I come, sent hither at God's will to warn you of that enemy, who, having miserably lost himself, is plotting now your fall ; that he may take revenge on the Creator, who has cast him out for ever from his presence. Listen then, while I proceed.

Adam. We do.

Raphael. As yet the world existed not, when on a certain day, the host of heaven resorted to God's throne, by his commandment summoned thither. Being gathered round it, the Almighty, at whose side sat his beloved Son, addressed them, saying : [*Paradise Lost*, b. v. l. 600.] “ Hear ye, every one among you, my promulg'd decree. This day have I begot my only Son, here placed at my right hand, whom I appoint your head ; and swear, that at the mention of his name, shall every knee be bent.” Thus spake the Majesty of God, and all among the host seemed pleased, but all, alas ! were not ; for when, soon after, night was come, and every eye but the Almighty's closed in slumber, Satan had no rest (I call him Satan, of whose enmity I am to warn you both) ; for honoured as he was above innumerable thousands of the heavenly

multitude, he could not brook the idea of a ruler over *him*, and therefore, instantly determined to dislodge with all his host, and not pay homage to the Son.

Intent on this rebellious scheme, and turning to his next in power, then sleeping not far off,
" Can't thou repose," said he, " when the Al-
" mighty's purpose as thou knowest is thus gone
" forth? New laws are laid upon us; but new
" laws from him who governs, may produce new
" minds in us that serve. Enough; for here to
" utter more would be unsafe. Rise therefore,
" and assembling our whole host, tell them their
" leader is commanded to march homeward at
" their head, and make fit preparation for this
" new made king, who will come after to or-
" dain them laws."

The inferior did as he was ordered, when the host began to move. Conducted by their chief, they passed extensive regions, and before the sun was up, attained the quarter of their destination, when in this wise he began:

" Oh princedoms, if one individual of you
" still retains that title, since you know another
" now usurps all empire to himself,—by him
" hath been occasioned all this midnight haste,—
" by him who means to follow so that you may
" pay him homage: but this homage *will* you
" pay him? No, you will not, if my judgment
" of

“ of you be well founded.”—I might here go on, detailing what the apostate added to this first pretext. Suffice it, you are told that he seduced them to rebellion, and that many battles afterwards were fought above. In these, as either side were nearly equal, heaven and (if the earth had then existed) earth would have entirely gone to wreck ; which to prevent, the Almighty, interfering, spoke : [*Paradise Lost*, b. vi. l. 699.]

Two days, beloved Son, are passed, since Michael and his powers have been engaged in combat with these Rebels. Be the third day thine. No more was necessary : the eternal Son obeyed, and with a host of saints came forth. Omnipotence prepared the way before him, and his countenance assumed a terror that no eye could look on unappalled. What need of words ? Dismayed at his approach among them, with ten thousand thunders in his hand, they fled, and headlong threw themselves from heaven into the bottomless abyss. Such was the end of their revolt, and such the fortune of that Satan, who is envious of your happiness, and will endeavour to seduce you from obedience ; so that you may share in his eternal punishment : but let not this example of the dreadful fate succeeding such rebellion prior to the world, be lost upon you. Satan might have stood, but fell. Remember what has been revealed, and sin not as he did.

Adam. Thanks, thanks, divine historian, for this admonition ; which, if God vouchsafe us grace, shall never perish in our minds ; but what if now, that we are thus refreshed, we visit yonder grassy turf beside the stream, and there converse still further, while we walk ? for day as yet is far from its decline, and not till then will you (we trust) withdraw : the sultry heat is over, and a pleasant breeze springs up.

Raphael. Come on then ; for till night I have to stay.

III.

*THE CREATION.

TIME *unknown.*

SCENE changes to another part of Eden.

RAPHAEL, ADAM, and EVE.

ADAM.

Far, far beyond all expectation is the event you have related. Once more we return the Almighty thanks with adoration, for the warning he

* The world's creation is computed to have taken place four thousand and four years before the birth of Jesus Christ, or five thousand seven hundred and ninety-four years ago. Note. If you would know the time that has elapsed since any circumstance recorded

he has graciously vouchsafed, and which we will for ever bear in mind. But since we know thus much, vouchsafe us farther favour, and provided such request be lawfully preferred, give us to understand how, first of all, this earth and every living thing thereon, began to be.

Eve. Which we would know, not merely to explore the secret things of God, but to extol his grandeur in proportion as our knowledge of his wonders is increased.

Raphael. Nor shall this wish, which I have leave to gratify, be disappointed. Know then, that when Satan had been overthrown, God viewing his victorious saints well pleased on their return, said to them: [*Paradise Lost, b. vii. l. 139.*]

“ The apostate has then failed, who thought
“ that every one would prove rebellious like
“ himself: but, since by his revolt he has so
“ much reduced in number the angelic host, I
“ will repair that loss, and frame another world,
“ together with a generation that shall issue from
“ one man, and dwell—not here indeed at first,

corded in this publication previous to the birth of Jesus Christ, was brought about, add the year of our Lord to the number of years accompanying the event, and you will have the thing you want; thus, Noah's deluge came to pass about two thousand three hundred and fifty years before the birth of Jesus Christ, to which if you add 1790, the year of our Lord when this was written, the total is four thousand one hundred and forty-four, which is the number of years, since which the deluge happened.

“ but in that new framed world, till having
“ passed their lives in virtue, they deserve their
“ habitation here. This too, beloved Son, shall
“ be thy work. Speak thou, and every thing
“ shall be performed.” The Son, at this de-
layed not, but went forth upon his expedition.
Heaven threw open her eternal gates ; when
round about his chariot, the acclaiming hosts
sung **GLORY BE TO GOD ON HIGH** : and thus
in the beginning, he created heaven and earth.
[*Genesis i.*]

“ Let there be light,” he said ; and there
was light, which he divided from the darkness ;—
and the evening and the morning made up the
first day.

Again he said, “ Be there a firmament to se-
“ parate the waters from the waters ;”—and the
evening and the morning made the second day.

Again he said : “ Be now the waters under
“ heaven collected in one place, and let dry land
“ appear. Let grass too spring upon the earth,
“ herb yielding seed, and fruit-tree yielding
“ fruit.” All this was done as he commanded ;
and the evening and the morning made up the
third day.

Again he said : “ Let lights be in the firmament
“ of heaven, to part the day from night ; and let
“ them be for signs and seasons, days and years.”

He spoke ; when, at his word, the sun, the moon,
and

and stars, were all created ;—and the evening and the morning made up the fourth day.

Again he said : “ Let the vast waters generate all creatures that have life ; and let the air too bring forth fowl.” He saw that they were good, and blessed them saying : “ be ye fruitful, and increase, and fill the air and waters ;—and the evening and the morning made up the fifth day.

Once more he said : “ Let now the earth produce brute beasts, and creeping things ; and to complete the work, let us make man in our own likeness : ” Upon this he formed you, Adam, in his image, bidding you be fruitful, multiply, subdue the earth, and have dominion over every creature breathing ;—and the evening and the morning made up the sixth day.

Thus have I now related briefly how the earth and heavens, with every plant, as well as every living creature were produced. If touching any thing besides you would enquire, proceed.

Adam. Besides ! what thanks have we to give for this, made known already ? Something I must say, however, yet remains, which thus emboldened I will venture to propound. When I consider that the world, this earth I mean we tread on, must be nothing but an atom, when compared with all the stars together, I am puzzled to conceive how they can be intended, as you say, for

signs

signs and seasons, days and years.—Were they all then created for one single purpose?) Eve is withdrawing.—But why this?—And yet on second thoughts I will not wish to keep you here; for that your fruits and flowers must be attended, I well know.

Eve. Yes, Adam; and do you, bright guest, permit I should withdraw. Thanks for the grace and favour shewn in our behalf already; neither will I take a formal leave—in hopes that you will still continue frequently to visit our abode.

Raphael. Go, Eve, wherever duty calls you, and be happy, hoping, not without good reason I shall soon return again.—(*After she is gone*) Angelic form! And yet, [Paradise Lost, b. 8, l. 40.] she goes not from us as but little pleased, or capable of being pleased with our expected conversation. No; the entertainment it will give her, she defers till you are the relater of it.— Well, wherever she may go, let peace and joy await her steps: but now to your request. The Almighty will not be displeased when he beholds you thirsting after knowledge; but that knowledge which shall benefit your state is not connected with the stars, nor will it make you happier if you know for certain whether they were all created for one single end, or not. Leave such mysterious things to God, for heaven is raised so high, that you can never come to know what is transacted there.

Adam.

Adam. With what conviction you reprove me. I retract my question therefore, and henceforward will be lowly wise: but yet, while you prolong your visit, hear in turn *my* story. You may see by this, how subtilly I endeavour to detain you; for indeed while I enjoy such company, methinks I am in heaven.

Raphael. And grateful likewise is your company. Begin then, while *I* listen. [Paradise Lost, b. viii. l. 253.]

Adam. When I first began to *be*, I was as one just waking out of sleep. To heaven, and round me, I directed my astonished view, and saw skies, mountains, oceans, and innumerable living creatures. I surveyed myself all over, but had no idea what I was. I tried to speak, and found I knew the name of every thing about me. "Thou " bright sun," I said, "air, earth, and all you " various creatures, say, if you but know as " much, who made me! I could never form " myself; and therefore must have had some " great and good creator. Tell me then, oh " tell me, where he is, that I may everlastingly " adore him." While I spake in this wise, but received no answer, there appeared among the trees a form of glorious, yet soft brightness. I fell down in worship at his feet; but he approached, and raising me, began as follows: "I " am that Creator thou wouldest know. This " Paradise,

“ Paradise, and every thing within it, I bestow
“ upon thee. Count it thine. I give thee like-
“ wise every plant and tree to be thy food, ex-
“ cept the tree of Good and Evil. *That* if thou
“ presume to eat of, thou shalt die. Excepting
“ that, whatever I have made is thine. In proof
“ of which, I summon hither every bird and
“ beast, and thou shalt call it what thou wilt.”
On this, they passed before me, two and two.
I found I understood their natures, and could
readily assign them names. I gazed as they
went by me; for methought I wanted something
which I could not find among them; when I
ventured to break forth, as follows: “ Oh what
“ shall I call thee, thou that art the giver of all
“ these good things? Thou hast provided for me
“ amply; but alas! unlike the brute creation,
“ I have no one to partake of my delights,
“ and can I by myself be happy?”

“ *By thyself!*” replied my Maker. “ Are not
“ earth and air replenished with a vast variety of
“ creatures, and the whole at thy command?
“ Art thou not well acquainted with their ways?
“ Enjoy then their society: they are enough to
“ entertain thee.”

“ Let not,” I replied, “ my words offend.
“ I am thy substitute, and these inferior to me.
“ What society or friendship can exist among
“ unequals? Beasts have, every one, their kind
“ to

“ to keep with : they are not fit company for
“ fowls, nor fowls for them. How therefore
“ can I join with either of them ? ”

“ Adam, I perceive,” said the Almighty,
“ thou affectest an exalted happiness indeed !
“ What then dost thou conceive of me ? That
“ I must be unhappy, being as I am alone,
“ from all eternity, for I can have no equal to
“ consort with ? ”

Thus spoke the Almighty ; but so spoke, that
I was not intimidated : boldly, therefore, I re-
plied : “ Thou art all perfect of thyself, adorable
“ Creator, and can’t raise the creature to what
“ height thou pleasest ; which man cannot do.”
To this I would have added something else ; but
with a smile he answered me : “ No more.
“ All this was to make trial of thee ; for I
“ knew myself it was not good that man should
“ be alone, and meant thee no such company
“ as thou hast hitherto beheld. Be sure then,
“ that what next I bring, shall be exactly suited
“ to thy wish and nature, shall be something
“ like thyself.”

With which he ended, or I lost the power of
hearing further ; for sleep suddenly came on me,
and I sunk into a dream. I thought him stand-
ing still beside me ; but soon after, stooping, he
laid open my left side, and took a rib out, which
he fashioned with his hands till it became a crea-
ture

ture like myself, though of much softer mold methought. She disappeared, and I awoke ; but, wonderful to mention ! still I saw her, and, if possible, more beautiful than I conceived her during sleep. I was no less unable at that moment to contain my extacies, than I am now, while speaking, to describe them. " She is " bone," exclaimed I in a transport, " of my " bone, and flesh extracted of my flesh. I call " her woman, being taken from my substance ; " therefore shall a man forsake his parents, and " cleave wholly to his wife, when they shall be " one flesh."—This is that story of my happiness I had it in my mind to tell.

Raphael. And with it we must end. While we have been conversing, nor remarked how time proceeded, has the day declined, and will be quickly at an end. The sun is on the point of setting, as you see, which is my signal to depart. Farewell ; be happy, and remember that your happiness you will derive from love ; but principally from that love, which is devoted to your Maker. Watch : the welfare of your children will depend on the obedience you give proof of.

Adam. Courteous messenger, if you must leave us, I submit ; but, notwithstanding, be still favourable to us both, and frequently return : your presence will increase our happiness.

Raphael.

Raphael. Doubt not but that the Lord will often send his messengers to visit you with his grace: Once more farewell.

IV.

PARADISE LOST, b. ix. l. 211.

THE FIRST DISPUTE.

BEFORE CHRIST 4004.

SCENE. *Another part of Eden.*

ADAM and EVE entering with garden implements.

ADAM.

I WILL allow all this, dear spouse; and that in vain we shall endeavour to preserve the beauty of the garden till more hands assist us.

Eve. Here me therefore, Adam: let us prosecute our labour at some greater distance from each other; for while thus we part not company, what wonder if such opportunity for looks and smiles occasion conversation; and, all day, prevent our making any riddance, after we suppose we have been toiling hard.

Adam. Oh doubt not, Eve, but that our joint endeavours will keep clear a spot sufficient for ourselves, till we are aided in the work by younger hands: but even were it not for this consideration, I should scarce, without much difficulty,

ture like myself, though of much softer mold methought. She disappeared, and I awoke ; but, wonderful to mention ! still I saw her, and, if possible, more beautiful than I conceived her during sleep. I was no less unable at that moment to contain my extacies, than I am now, while speaking, to describe them. " She is " bone," exclaimed I in a transport, " of my " bone, and flesh extracted of my flesh. I call " her woman, being taken from my substance ; " therefore shall a man forsake his parents, and " cleave wholly to his wife, when they shall be " one flesh."—This is that story of my happiness I had it in my mind to tell.

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Adam. Oh doubt not, Eve, but that our joint endeavours will keep clear a spot sufficient for ourselves, till we are aided in the work by younger hands: but even were it not for this consideration, I should scarce, without much difficulty,

difficulty, yield to any absence from each other, while we carry on our task ; for recollect what caution has been given us lately with regard to that malicious foe who envies our condition, and perhaps, while we are speaking now, is watching some fit opportunity for his attack upon us : And what fitter opportunity can be presented him, than when we are asunder, and unable to assist each other ? Leave not then your husband, who will guard you from all danger, should the attack be made when you are near him.

Eve. That we have an enemy I know ; but that, on such account, you should thus doubt my disposition to withstand, I never could have fancied I should hear.

Adam. I do not doubt your disposition, when I speak against this separation ; but would have you shun the danger, which is certainly sufficient to be feared, whether with violence or subtlety, the evil spirit should attempt to practise on you. Strong he must be, that could war with those archangels who resisted his revolt, and subtle, who could bring so many over to his party !

Eve. If our state is this, that we must always live in fear of danger, how is either of us happy.

Adam. Oh beloved Eve, all things are best as they are willed by God ; for nothing has he left deficient. How then have we reason to complain ? Within us lies the danger ; but against our

our will we neither can be conquered nor ensnared. Our will is absolutely free, since reason is its only master. God has notwithstanding bid us take good heed, lest false appearances induce our reason to approve what, otherwise, it would forbid. It is not then mistrust, but love, dear partner, that enjoins me to persuade you from a trial that may possibly ensue. Then seek not what may come unsought. Would you, upon the other hand, approve your virtue! first approve your duty. *That* I can be judge of; but by no means of the other, should your virtue be attacked when we are parted. If however you are inwardly convinced of being safe when at a distance, go, in God's name, whither you think proper; for unless your stay be voluntary, you are just the same as if away; and I would rather counsel your departure, than by force induce you to remain.

Eve. This now makes full amends, and I withdraw; but yet upon my guard. Nor can I fancy such a powerful enemy will be upon the watch for me, who am the weaker. Should he be so, in that case, my triumph will but overwhelm him with the greater shame. I go, but will not make it long till my return. [Thus far *Paradise Lost.*]

Adam (alone, and looking after Eve). Farewell, beloved Eve.—I trace her with my eye; but

but rather could have wished she had remained. She goes towards yonder arbour of pomegranates, and stoops often by the way to raise some drooping flower.—Still she proceeds.—I see her still, yet very faintly.—One glimpse more, and she is gone.—Yes, now has she entirely disappeared ; and till such time as she return, must I deceive with labour, if I can, the weary time. This way the ground wants riddance. It were meet I went no great way off, or she will have to seek me through the garden, when, fatigued with labour, she comes back.

V.

THE FALL OF MAN.

BEFORE CHRIST 4004.

SCENE *continues.*ADAM (*re-entering with a Garland.*)

I Could not prosecute my task, thus separated from myself, my better half ; and therefore to divert the moments, have I made this garland, which I mean to crown her with, when she returns. But whither can her steps have strayed ? She has been absent now three hours and upward, though she promised it should not be long till her return. Alas ! my mind misgives me much ;

much ; for while, not knowing what to think of such delay, I went in search of her, it thundered. *That* however is not to be thought astonishing ; it was occasioned by the sultry weather.—But the earth, methought, shook under me. Yes, yes, it did so. I could never be deceived in that.—Why should it shake ? I was alarmed myself, and fearing she might be alarmed much more, have hastened back ; yet still she is not here ! What can it mean ? and wherefore shook the earth ? That circumstance remains to be explained.—But soft, methinks I see her ; yes, and near the same pomegranate arbour which she passed on leaving me. My fairest, my beloved, is safe and happy ; for how blithely does she come forward ! (*To Eve entering with a bough.*) Oh my Eve ! where have you—

Eve. Oh my Adam ! [*Paradise Lost*, b. ix. l. 856.] doubtless you have wondered at my absence ; but the cause is most astonishing. This tree we have been told of, is not one producing death ; but such, if we but taste it, as will make us gods ; for I have found it such. But wherefore this ? Why do you thus let fall that garland, and stand speechless ? Hear me to the end ; for who would have believed so much ? yet is it true, dear Adam, that the serpent, not forbidden as we are, or wiser than to brook so envious a restraint, has plucked the fruit, and of a sudden

is

is become like us, endowed with speech and understanding, and has so prevailed on me, that I have tasted likewise. Taste then you too, Adam, and forthwith be what I feel within myself I am.

Adam (afide.) Oh miserable Eve ! how have you lost yourself, and me too with you ! This is that insidious enemy's contrivance, against whom we were advised, and such the means he has devised for our destruction : our's, I say ; for of a certainty, with you I shall not hesitate to die. How can I live indeed without you ? Had I twenty other ribs to spare, and should the Almighty make more Eves, yet never would the recollection of my first be done away.

Eve. What are you saying ?

Adam (still aside.) It has now no cure, and therefore I submit.—(*to Eve.*) Adventurous woman, bold you were indeed to taste of this forbidden fruit. And yet it may be likely that you will not be condemned to die. Perhaps the deed is now become less criminal, the serpent having first prophaned this fruit, on whom, besides, it has not been as yet found deadly. He, as you inform me, lives, and has obtained some portion of our nature. Why then may not we grow gods ? Be that however, as it may, for I resolve to undergo one fortune with you. We are one ; and should I lose you,

you, my first thought would be that I had lost myself.

Eve. Oh glorious proof of love, that would induce you rather to chuse death, than life without me! But no death will here ensue. Taste then without one fear.

Adam. There, Eve:—and thus the deed is done.—But what means this?

Eve. This! what?

Adam. This earthquake? and, besides, does it not thunder?

Eve. If it do, need we regard it?

Adam. If it do! Alas! it is God's voice: it is the declaration of our guilt. It was his hand that shook the earth just now, when, at your invitation, wretched as I shewed myself, I eat. I felt an earthquake, yea, and heard it thunder too before. Did not this happen when you eat?

Eve. Perhaps it did.

Adam. Unfortunately, gave you ear to that false serpent, who thus counterfeited human voice. How shall I view God's face in future? His celestial presence will be sure to overwhelm me! Would to heaven you had remained with me this morning when that strange desire of rambling seized you.

Eve. Granting I have done amiss, will you impute to that desire of rambling, as you call it,

what would no less certainly have happened to yourself, had you been where the serpent was. But being, as you think you are, my lord, my master, why did you not order me to stay? Upon the other hand, you bad me go. Had you but shewn, you were resolved I should obey—then neither you nor I should have offended, as perhaps we have.

Adam. Ungrateful Eve! is this then the return you make my love? I am accused as the occasion of your sin! What could I do, but warn you of the risque you ran? Self-confidence however urged you forward.—Yet, perhaps, I really did wrong, in fancying no temptation would assail you. I lament, alas! that error now; and much more so, since you, it seems, must be the accuser.

Eve. Is the accusation false?

Adam. Hence, serpent!—Serpent?—did I use that word, after those many names suggested by endearment which till now, so often I employed?—Yes, yes, I did; and to have used it is the first sad consequence that marks our disobedience. Anger in my heart, and accusation from your lips, in lieu of those affectionate expressions that were wont to issue from them.—(After a pause.) I observe this circumstance has some effect; for you are moved. Your tears begin to flow. Unhappy woman! that you weep is well;

and

and well, too, that your knees thus sink beneath you ; for I see you are preparing to fall down before me. Yet approach not ; for unhappy as I am, I have no consolation to bestow.

Eve. Do not, oh do not throw me off, dear Adam, I beseech you. Witness heaven, what reverence for you still possesses my whole heart, convinced as I am now of my enormous sin, though utterly insensible thereto of late. Look now at my humility, and ask yourself, if you renounce me, whither I shall go ?

Adam. If I renounce you !

Eve. Yes ; for notwithstanding we have both offended, you have angered only God ; while I have angered you as well as God. Forgive me therefore you, and I will make it my incessant prayer to God, that the whole punishment may fall upon my head.

Adam (aside.) My heart, alas ! relents. She was so lately the whole pleasure of my life. She was myself : and can I hate her now, when she is kneeling at my feet ? Oh no.—Rise therefore, Eve : the storm is over in my heart ; for do we not both equally need pardon ?—What then have we left to do, but here upon the spot where I at least have sinned, fall down in the Almighty's presence, and crave pardon of our guilt ? He cannot but abate of his displeasure.—But what

means that sight? a cloud is now descending, and no doubt with something heavenly in it.—I discern a band, and Raphael at their head.—He leaves them now upon the hill, and moves this way. Now may we look for tidings that will ascertain our lot. He comes. Withdraw you then. Your agitations will not let you meet him as you ought. Come, I will lead you on one side.—

Eve. Oh heaven! to what are we reserved?

Adam. I know not.—He is here.—Lean on my arm.

VI.

PARADISE LOST, b. xi. l. 251.

THE CONDEMNATION.

SCENE continues.

RAPHAEL meeting ADAM.

RAPHAEL.

ADAM, the commands of God require no preparation. Be it then sufficient that the prayers and supplications you and your companion meant to utter, are vouchsafed, and that his MERCY is prevailed on to put off for many years the punishment your sin deserved upon the spot; that by a number of good actions you may both

both atone for this one act of disobedience, when the Lord perhaps will quite deliver you from death: but here you are no longer to remain; and after having visited your habitation with so many messages of love, now every thing is changed, and I am sent to put you out.

Eve (rushing in.) Oh worse than what we feared! And must I leave you, blessed Eden, for a desolate and barren world? Must I—

Raphael. Be pacified. Lament not in this manner; but resign what you have lost. You are not sentenced by yourself to leave this paradise: Your husband too must leave it; and to follow him you are at all times bound.

Adam. We will, alas! both of us do our duty, which can only be by resignation. If then there be any mournful tidings still to come, let us be told the worst.

Raphael. Yes, there is something else, indeed, which I unwillingly denounce; but the commands of God must be obeyed; for I am sent not only to deprive you of this habitation, but pass sentence on your sin. What could induce you thus to disobey the Almighty's will? Speak, Adam.

Adam. Oh my heart! my heart! that while I speak is rent asunder by two passions which would both be heard; for I must either take upon myself

myself the whole of that offence we have committed, or accuse my better half, whose fault I should, upon the other hand, conceal : but is not the whole matter known to God? And are not you come hither to pass sentence on us? This compels me to acknowledge, that the woman I received from God, first held me out the fruit ; on which I eat.

Raphael. But was she a divinity, that you obeyed her voice, and would not follow your Creator's will?—Oh woman! why have you done this?

Eve. What can I say, alas! in my excuse, but that the serpent tempted me to eat.

Raphael. Hear then the sentence so much guilt deserves. Because the serpent has done this, above all cattle is he cursed : upon his belly shall he go, and while he lives, eat dust. And God will put inveterate enmity between his seed and Eve's. Eve's seed shall bruise his head, and he shall bruise their heel. This is God's sentence on the serpent. Hear it, ye offending pair, and be assured that in the course of ages, but not now, his mercy shall appear to human beings, when they learn the meaning of such bruise. But God, oh woman! greatly will increase thy sorrow in conception : yea in anguish shalt thou bring forth children, while thy husband's will rules over thine. And as for thee, oh man! since thou hast hearkened

hearkened to thy wife, and eaten of the tree concerning which God said thou shalt not touch it, cursed is the ground : in sorrow shalt thou eat thereof, as long as thou hast life. Thorns too and thistles shall it plenteously produce. Thy food shall not be earned without much sweat, and this shall be thy daily life till thou return to dust ; for thou art dust, and shalt at length be mingled with the dust again.

Adam. Are all things come to this ? but God's good will be done ! It is but just we should be thus severely sentenced, after having so deliberately sinned. What grieves my spirit, notwithstanding, most, is this : that for the future we shall never see God more. I could have otherwise come often here, and told my sons, that on this hill, or near that pine, or by yon fountain, he vouchsafed in the beginning to converse with me, no less familiarly than I myself with them.

Eve. But this is now impossible ; for in the world to which we must be banished, how are we to trace his footsteps ?

Raphael. Once more be of comfort. Heaven is his ; yet not heaven only, but the earth. Conceive not then that to this garden he confines his presence. He is every where, and will be found by all that worship him. Let worship therefore, be the business of your lives, and you

will prove less miserable in the thought that you have lost this paradise, when you discover you possess a better paradise within yourselves. But we must finish ; for behold the cherubims expect me on the hill. Go, and once more be comforted. The world is all before you to make choice therein of some fit habitation, and God's goodness will be there your guide.

VII.

GENESIS iv.

THE BIRTH OF THE FIRST CHILD.

BEFORE CHRIST 4003.

SCENE. *An arbour.*

ADAM and EVE, with CAIN, an infant in his mother's arms.

ADAM.

R EPOSE yourself against this bank, dear Love : how is it with you now ?

Eve. Oh well indeed, dear Adam ; but supposing it were otherwise, yet still that joy which filled me, when I told you “ I had got a man “ child from the Lord,” subsists without abatement in my bosom, and would aid me to support the weakness of my frame.

Adam.

Adam. That joy is gratitude to God ; and therefore cherish it within your heart, beloved spouse.

Eve. I will ; and thanks be to his goodness for this pledge he has bestowed upon us of our future happiness, as long as we have life, though purchased at the price to me, of so much bodily distress and pain.

Adam. The blessed babe ! Shall I inform you, dearest Eve, that when I first gazed at him, lying on the bank where you remember you had laid him, sweeter than the flowers that shed their fragrance round him, I was struck with two ideas—that of our rebellion against God, and of our infant's unoffending innocence. How odious in God's sight must not the first have been, since it deprived us of the bliss resulting from his presence ! but how lovely, on the other hand,—

Eve. I know what you would say, dear Adam : how inestimably lovely in his sight the last, since its possessor, in his present helpless situation, is so visibly supported by him ! for alas, what is there we could possibly accomplish to protect him ? What though but to lengthen out his life one single day ? How plainly do we not behold God's finger in his preservation ! Were it not for that, the slightest cough would shake him all to pieces ; nay, still further, the least motion of his limbs would utterly disjoint them.

Adam. Therefore, from the contemplation of this innocence, that so endears him to God's goodness, let us shape our lives in such a manner as to merit for ourselves continual tokens of that goodness.

Eve. Oh the overflowing measure of it ! the abundant mercy mitigating his severity ! for he can draw forth funshine from the cloud. " In anguish shalt thou bring forth children," was the sentence of his wrath. Sad omen this for me, who, as he said, was to be fruitful, and to multiply and fill the earth ! but how has not his mercy changed the scene ; for could it have been thought that any one producing in such sorrow, should behold the produce of her womb with so much joy ? Dear infant ! let me strain thee to my heart once more ! Where am I ? In the paradise again ; yes, in the very Eden we so lately lost.—Stoop and support me, Adam ; for my transports are so great, they cannot be sustained !—Hark ! hark !

Adam. Be not alarmed, dear Eve.

Eve. Does it not thunder ?

Adam. At a distance : but fear nothing. God thus moderates the sound, lest it should too much shake your frame.

Eve. I fear it not. Far otherwise : let the Almighty's voice be heard. It is a token of his love ;

love; for being, as I am, a mother now, and happy through the working of his providence, I can dread nothing from him. Therefore am I calm; calm as the babe in my embrace; for God is in reality all love, and I am safe in his protecting care.

Adam. We are both safe; and so too is our little one. Come therefore, Eve, and as through disobedience we became unhappy, let us, through obedience be in future happy. I, for my part, dearest Eve, am so already, even in my resolution to give proof thereof; and never till this moment did that salutation of the angel sent on message to us from his place in heaven, "Hail "mother of mankind!"—so much rejoice me, as it does while I am now thus talking to you.

Eve. Yes; and to the angel's salutation, let me add, "Hail every future mother too!" Your joy shall be surpassed by nothing but the tenderness with which you are to view those little objects that create it. But if merely, as I do, to gaze upon them, shall occasion you such joy, what will not your fond transports be, in future, to conduct them up towards men and women, to inculcate in them notions of God's goodness, and be aided in your labour by those very hands that first of all were fashioned of your substance. Once again, dear Adam, should I

faint, be ready to sustain me: a new tide of pleasure is poured out within my soul; and as in times of grief I needed consolation, so at present, in the overflow of my delighted heart, I need support.

Adam. And I am by, beloved spouse, to give it: But come on, the babe lies sleeping, and God's goodness is preparing blessings for him. Come; he will not need a mother's presence any longer, and the air of yon delightful spot will strengthen your weak frame. Let me support you while you rise to lay our little angel on his usual bed of flowers.—Lean on my arm.

Eve. I do, I do.—God's providence be praised for all things!

VIII.

GENESIS iv.

THE MURDER OF ABEL.

BEFORE CHRIST 3875.

IN the course of some few years succeeding the creation, many children, as we find in Genesis, were born to our first parents: Cain however was their first-born child; and after him came Abel, who it seems was at a very early period

period murdered by his elder brother. God, we read, was better pleased with Abel's sacrifices than his brother's; since, this last, who was a shepherd, often sacrificed the firstlings of his flock, while Cain, who tilled the ground, brought nothing but the fruits thereof. We must not yield, however, to the thought that Abel's sacrifices, in themselves, and from no other circumstance, were more acceptable to God than Cain's. A proper notion of his justice naturally leads us to believe their characters were different. Accordingly, this difference of character, which was in Abel's favour, recommended him to the Almighty's love. This, Cain's impatient temper could not bear, and therefore, in a fit of fury, he destroyed his guiltless brother; for which crime, he took an opportunity as they were walking with each other in the fields.

As Cain had never yet beheld a lifeless human body, we may rationally think the sight of Abel bleeding on the ground, had some effect. He fled; and very shortly after, Adam, with his wife, came nigh the spot. Imagine how the sight of a beloved child, not only dead, but murdered, must have wrought upon them: we pretend not to detail their lamentations; but shall hasten to the close, by representing Cain as coming back, when God had judged him for

for the crime, and, in this manner, venting his remorse.

Cain. My father and my mother here ! Alas ! what shall I say for having thus deprived you of your child ? But God has punished me already. Nothing therefore now remains but that you likewise should proceed to punish me.

Adam. What do I learn ? At once, who killed my Abel, and that while I mourn his death, the punishment must be inflicted on another of my children. Is this possible !

Eve. Oh Cain, my first born ! When I boasted, in the transport of my bosom, at your birth, of having got a man from God, could I imagine that his brother to come after him, would thus be ravished from me by his hand ? Unhappy Cain ! you have undone us !

Cain. For myself, I could have borne the punishment, since I presumed to perpetrate the crime : but how shall I endure the thought, when I am wandering through the world, as God has sentenced me to do ; that you are left thus solitary, and by my means robbed of an inestimable blessing, one, perhaps, more precious than the paradise you lost before ? You bend, alas, while I am speaking, over my poor brother's breathless corpse ! Afflicted parents ! hear what further will no doubt affect your tenderness,

tenderness, unworthy though I am. Hear, I entreat you, for God's vengeance follows me behind, and hardly will permit even this delay.

Adam. Alas! what more afflicting have you yet to tell us.

Cain. I abominated Abel, being jealous of the preference he had in God's regard. I could not see, if I did well, that I should be accepted likewise; but if ill, that sin was at the door. I raised my arm against his life. I smote him with a stone; but scarcely had I done the dreadful deed, but God, proceeding to my punishment, enquired for Abel, saying, with an angry voice, *Where is he, Cain?*—*I know not,* was my answer in the horror of my soul—*Am I his keeper?* Miserable man, returned the Deity, *what is it thou hast done?* *Thy brother's blood calls out for vengeance on thee, from the ground.* Accursed therefore shalt thou be for having murdered him; and, like a vagabond, roam up and down. This is my punishment. From you I must depart, and never see you more. From God too I am sundered. My sad doom is more than I can bear!—A brother put to death by my unfeeling hand! My parents rendered miserable!—lost for ever!—And my Maker!—How shall I endure the thought?—Oh save, save me! I sink under the distress.

Adam.

Adam. He faints ! what shall we do ?—His crime indeed is great ; but, after all, is he not still our child ?—Oh heaven, assist us to revive him !—Were he any were but here !—That rill of water yonder !—Haste, beloved Eve, we have no time to lose.—Let us together bear him thither.

Eve. Miserable hour ! God give us strength sufficient to endure it.

[*They go out, carrying the body between them.*]

IX.

ORIGINAL.

THE DEATH OF ADAM.

BEFORE CHRIST 3074.

SCENE. *A habitation.*

ADAM lying on a bed, and EVE attending near him.

ADAM.

YES, now indeed, beloved partner of my life, must be fulfilled the sentence passed upon us formerly in paradise, that *we are dust, and shall at length be mingled with the dust again.* Full soon, dear Eve, I feel within me, that this frame of mine, in some degree yet warm with life, will be a cold and breathless lump of clay.

Eve.

Eve. And is there then no hope !

Adam. No hope ! Who is it asks that question ? Upwards of nine hundred years have I inhabited the world, and found all objects changing in it. In the morning of my days, I had not that full strength which, at the noon tide of my being, I experienced ; since which period, that full strength has been decaying. And what am I now, in this late evening of my life ? — the shadow of a man, and nothing better. You too, Eve, are almost come to my old age. Our death then, far from being thought surprising or unpleasant, should be welcomed as a situation naturally in succession to the situation we were in before. God's pleasure has decreed this progress should take place, and every thing his providence ordains, should be submitted to with patience.

Eve. Yes, dear Adam, *that* I know full well : but how shall I submit to this eternal separation, after we have lived so many years together in the world ? Alas ! methinks that miserable day is come again when we were dispossessed of Eden !

Adam. Far, far otherwise, dear Eve ; for then, in lieu of paradise, we had no other but a desolate or dreary world before us. In that dreary world our lot was to be fixed : while now a land of happiness is ready to receive, not both of us

indeed,

indeed, but me at least. The case is widely different therefore, and my situation in this stage of being, not calamitous, but even joyful. Weep no more then, my beloved spouse. Your Adam will be soon translated from a world of grief, from such old age as his, into a land of happiness; and you too will soon follow him. You will be happy likewise.

Eve. I complain no more, dear husband. On the other hand, your resignation dissipates all my reluctances; and in the spirit of religion, I could wish the day of this release to both of us were come.

Adam. It will come shortly, *Eve*: but till it come, let me employ the short remainder of my life in such a manner as may prove most profitable to our children; for, indeed, my end draws nigh! oh, very nigh indeed! Where are they?

Eve. At the entrance, waiting till you wish to see them.

Adam. Be it therefore now. So call them in, dear spouse.—(*After Eve is gone out.*) Oh my Creator, and my Father, for whatever thou hast done in my behalf, since all things have been in my favour, I return thee thanks. I bless thy providence, for placing me at first in paradise; for my expulsion thence; and lastly, for this visitation. My expulsion was designed to strengthen

my

my repentance, and this visitation is designed to bring me once again into thy presence ; which, through sin, I had before-hand forfeited.—*(To his children that are here brought in by Eve,)* Oh, you are come as I desired. Draw near, beloved children. Hear, without replying, my last words ; and let the first man dying by the hand of nature, and not violence, instruct you. Do not weep thus bitterly ; or rather, do not seem thus frightened. There is no degree of terror in this death of mine, like what there was in that of my beloved Abel, whom you never saw, when your unhappy mother and myself beheld him bleeding on the ground. To you I speak, my first born, my dear Seth ; for surely I may call you so, and speak you for me to your brothers and your sisters, when this tongue of mine has lost all power of utterance. I am going now the way, as you will find, of all flesh : I am going to my God. I am not torn away from life, but reunited to the Power that made me. Think not, therefore, that he manifests the terror of his power in this solemnity ; but, on the other hand, that he looks down upon me with a smile : and that at no time I have ever been so truly under his protection, as at present ; for to him particularly do the weak, the afflicted, and the sick, belong. Nine hundred years and upwards have I lived,

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and

and had experience of the Almighty's goodness. May I not employ that word, since his severity has all been goodness ? Oh my children, be instructed by your dying father ; for experience has convinced him that the only refuge man can fly to in the pains of life, is God, who will be found a never failing refuge. Having this to trust to, you may hope for all good things, since there is nothing but what God can give you. I would say much more, dear children for your comfort ; but the icy hand of death is on me. Farewell then for ever ! I have often told you, and at present with the spirit of a prophet, once again I tell you, that the condemnation passed upon our sin in paradise, shall not exist for ever. More I cannot say. Where are you Seth, my first-born ? In God's name I bless you. Bless you in my name, your brothers, and your sisters.—Oh my wife, my children !

Eve. He is fallen asleep.—First cover him, and then to meditation.

HOLY

HOLY WRIT FAMILIARIZED

TO

JUVENILE CONCEPTIONS.

THE SECOND AGE OF THE WORLD.

ARTICLE X.

GENESIS vii.

THE DELUGE.

BEFORE CHRIST 2349.

OF all the numberless events that must have happened in the world's first age, that is to say, from the creation, upwards of six thousand years ago, to Noah's flood, comprising in the whole a space of sixteen hundred years, there are but very few recorded in the sacred books by Moses, author of the book of Genesis, together with the four that follow. There are none indeed, excepting the creation, Adam's disobedience, his expulsion out of paradise, the death of Abel by his brother, and the flight of this last mentioned into what is called the land of Nod, where Moses tells us he begot both sons and daughters, but without informing us where he procured a wife; which

which circumstance, and many others that attended the first peopling of the world, must everlastingly remain wrapped up in darkness. Nothing but the few transactions, we repeat, just mentioned, is delivered down by Moses ; if, however, we except the taking up of Enoch into heaven, who did not die like other human beings, and the genealogy of Adam down to Noah, who was living when the flood prevailed ; and who, as we shall find, had such a capital concern therein.

The world had now existed sixteen hundred years, as said already ; during all which period, human wickedness went on incessantly increasing ; so that God determined to destroy all creatures, which he willed to do by drowning. This destruction, which we call a deluge, came to pass two thousand three hundred and fifty years, or thereabouts, before the birth of Christ, when Noah was six hundred years of age ; but as it was not the design of God entirely to put out his work, but rather, in the first place, punish those whose wickedness so much offended him, and afterward produce another race of men, that after the example of their father, should lead better lives, his providence selected Noah for that end, whose piety distinguished him, together with his family, as fitting to be saved from perishing in this destruction.

In

In pursuance of this merciful intention, with regard to Noah, God informed him that the end of all flesh was arrived : the earth, as Moses mentions, being filled with violence. He was directed, therefore, to construct an ark, or vessel, for his safety, when the flood came on. This ark was likewise to receive on board it pairs of every living creature, which, by such means, should be kept alive, and afterwards continued.

Noah's family consisted of himself, his wife, three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, with their wives. All these, together with the creatures, having got into this ark, the fountains of the deep were broken up ; incessant rain came down : and, for the space of nearly half a year, the world, or so much of it as was then inhabited, lay under water ; so that all flesh died which moved upon the earth, with every fowl, and every creeping thing, and every human being ; save, as we have said already, Noah, and those with him in the ark.

But God remembered these, and caused a mighty wind to blow ; the fountains of the deep were likewise stopped, and no more rain came down ; in consequence of which, the ark soon after rested on the mountain Ararat, in Asia. To discover if the waters were subsided, Noah, upon this, sent forth a raven, which went to and fro.

fro. He let a dove fly likewise with the raven, which returned, not finding any place to rest on. Seven days after, he dispatched the dove a second time, which, coming back, had in her beak an olive leaf. This was a certain sign to Noah that the waters were assuaged. Delaying, therefore, yet seven other days, he put the dove out once again, that never afterward returned.

From this, the patriarch had sufficient reason to believe the waters had subsided; and accordingly uncovering, as is said, the ark, he looked and found the surface of the ground quite dry. On this, himself, together with his family, and every creature in the ark, came forth.

And having fixed his habitation in a proper place, he built an altar to the Lord, and sacrificed thereon; the favour mounting up to heaven. With this the Almighty was so satisfied, that in his heart, he promised never any more to curse the ground, or kill the animals as he had done.

“ While earth remains,” said God, “ seed time and harvest, cold and heat, and day and night, shall never cease. Be fruitful, therefore,” he continued, blessing Noah with his family, “ and multiply and fill the earth; for I establish with you both, and with your seed, my covenant, that there shall be no second flood upon the earth at any time. And in the clouds I

“ put

put my bow of many colours ; so that when the rains descend, it shall be seen by way of token to you, that the earth shall never be destroyed again by water.

XI.

GENESIS ix.

NOAH'S CURSE.

SCENE. *A tent.*

BEFORE CHRIST 2234.

NOAH (*sleeping uncovered*), SHEM, HAM, and JAPHETH.

HAM (*to Shem and Japheth following him*). COME, dear Shem and Japheth ; come, and see what shame the immoderate use of wine exposes people to.

Shem. Asleep, and thus uncovered !—Why,—it is our father !

Japheth. Yes, even he ; unfortunately he has drunk too freely of the vine tree planted by himself, and, therefore, is as we behold him.

Ham. Truly is he so ; but though we call him father, can we keep from laughter, think-

ing that a man, and one too of his age, should so disgrace himself.

Shem. Oh, brother, you are greatly in the wrong: he is our father, and the reverence we all owe him should admonish us, as children, to conceal his faults, if he has any, and not ridicule him. Sleeping and uncovered thus indeed! but run, good Japheth, if you love me, run and fetch a garment from behind the tent.

Japheth. But what to do?

Ham. Aye, what indeed!

Shem. To cover him, lest Ham should any longer see his weakness and deride it.—(*To Ham*). Yes, dear brother, we will save you, if we can, in future, from the sin of such irreverent conduct.

Japheth. That was spoken like a brother, and I run to fetch the garment. Did you say, behind the tent?

Shem. Yes, brother; you will find it on the ground. (*Japheth goes out*).

Noah (waking, and in a low voice). Where am I got to? I have lost myself!

Ham. But, in reality, you would not have me, then, assist you in this business of the garment?

Shem. You might do so, Ham. At least, however, it were better we spoke softly. We may else awake our father.

Ham.

Ham. That would be a pity.

Noah. (*aside.*) Else awake their father!—What are they about—(*Japheth enters*). What means that garment Japheth has upon his shoulders?—I will lie and watch their motions.

Japheth. Here is what you want, I fancy, brother.

Shem. Yes, the same.—But can you guess what I intend to do, now you have brought it?—Have a little patience, then, and you shall see. Give me the garment: I will put this corner here upon my shoulder, and do you throw this too over yours. Now, turn about. Is it behind you?

Ham. How can he tell that, unless he turns about again to see? Ha! ah! ah! ah!

Japheth. Be quiet, brother.—Yes, it is behind me: but now what do you design to do?

Ham. Ha! ah! ah! ah!

Shem. Well, now walk softly backwards toward my father. We may then throw down the garment over him, without discovering his disorder. Do not walk too fast, however, brother: we may tread upon him else. (*Ham still laughs.*) Ham laughs, because we love our father, and would hide his nakedness; but let him laugh; we know our duty better than that comes to.—Now, are you prepared to drop it?

Noah (starting up). Do not be affrighted, children : I have heard the whole, and bless your filial duty. Praised be the God of Shem, and Ham shall be his servant.

Shem. Oh, dear father.

Noah. God shall likewise shed his goodness upon Japheth : he shall dwell with Shem, and Ham shall be *his* servant too. Nay, more : a servant shall he be to wait on other servants. Now, perform your pious purpose. Cover me, and I will sleep off my disorder : I should blush with shame for this indecency ; yet *that* is no excuse for Ham. Go, Shem and Japheth. Look not back ; but as for Ham, let him remain, if he would aggravate the curse I have pronounced already on him.

Japheth (to Ham). Come, brother : On the morrow he may pardon you ; but yield at present to his anger.

XII. XIII.

GENESIS ix.

NIMROD, AND THE CONFUSION OF
TONGUES AT BABEL.

BEFORE CHRIST 2234.

Altered from the 12th Book of PARADISE LOST.

THUS, since creation, have we seen one race
Swept from the earth, and others fill their
place.

These others, while as yet they prov'd but few,
And of Heaven's wrath their terror prov'd still
new,

Paying some deference to things just and right,
Liv'd as if conscious of their Maker's might.
Till Nimrod, of proud heart, the Almighty sent,
Who not with equal rule and power content,
Wide o'er his brother tribes dominion held,
And from among their dwellings peace expell'd ;
To death pursuing those that scorn'd his sway,
For of mankind, not beasts, he made his prey.
A mighty hunter thence was Nimrod nam'd,
As if by right divine that boast he claimed :
And from rebellion his proud title drew,
Tho' for rebellion's crime such throngs he slew :

D 3

He,

He, with a band, whom like ambition join'd,
With him, or under him, to waste mankind,
Marching from Eden, sought with vain essay,
Deep in the earth a tower's strong base to lay,
Whose summit might reach heaven ; lest fortune-toft.

Their memory should in distant lands be lost.
But God, who to divine what mortals mean,
Oft thro' their habitations walks unseen,
Came down and view'd their tower before its rise

To menace, as they thought, his distant skies.
This their mad scheme to baffle and confound,
Into each builder's mouth the walls around
A different tongue he put ; when strait in lieu
Of former words forgot, they utter'd new.
What but disorder thro' the band then rung ;
Each speaking as he did a various tongue ?—
Thus ceased the building, whose unfinish'd frame
Of Babel or CONFUSION took the name.

Thus did this latter world pass impious o'er,
From guilty to worse deeds, like that before :
Till God grown weary of their wretched ways
Even the season of those early days,
Too pure of sight such wickedness to view,
His presence from among their tents withdrew ;
Fix'd notwithstanding, from the rest to chuse,
A nation, that like them should not refuse

The

The Maker his just praise, but every day
Due worship on their knees devoutly pay.
A nation fix'd to chuse, of faithful men,
Righteous and just, yet they not living then :
But from one man to spring: one man, and he
Taught before heathen gods to bend his knee.
Such, though to idol adoration rear'd
Weigh'd in God's scale an instrument appear'd,
Fit not alone from sin to save *his* race,
But the whole world that should his faith em-
brace,
When from his loins the Saviour had once
sprung,
Born of a woman, and yet God's own Son.
This is that promis'd seed, which erst, what time
Were our first parents thrust from Eden's clime,
Raphael denouncing their sad sentence, said
Should at his coming bruise the serpent's head.

Ninety-six years after this event, Mizraim, the grandson of Ham, led a colony into Egypt, and laid the foundation of a kingdom, which lasted 1663 years; whence Egypt is, in Scripture, called the land of Ham, and the Egyptian Pharoahs boasted they were all the sons of ancient kings.

HOLY WRIT FAMILIARIZED

TO

JUVENILE CONCEPTIONS.

THE THIRD AGE OF THE WORLD.

ARTICLE XIV.

GENESIS xii.

THE CALLING OF ABRAM.

BEFORE CHRIST 1920.

SCENE. *A Shepherd's tent.*

ABRAM and LOT.

LOT.

OUR journey into Egypt, here, has been in vain. I prophesied no less, if you remember, uncle, when we quitted Haran ; but the purpose seemed a favourite one. You were resolved and I could not in duty but comply.

Abram. A mighty hand has been concerned in every thing since our departure from the land of Canaan, though at present Pharoah orders us to leave his realm. Oh nephew, shall I tell you all? I have been hitherto deterred from this disclosure,

disclosure, thinking that whatever I should say might be considered as proceeding from a weak, if not distempered brain: but such events have happened since the time we first left Haran for this place, that I can plainly see God's finger in whatever has been done.

Lot. What is it you allude to? Let me know the whole, that I may judge in the affair, since I am interested in these wanderings to and fro of ours.

Abram Attend then, and prepare to be astonished. This is the whole story. While we lived in Ur of the Chaldeans, in my father's lifetime, I was keeping watch one evening with my flocks, when on a sudden there appeared a gracious form from heaven before me.—Yes, from heaven, dear *Lot*; but give attention to my tale, and do not interrupt me.—I was seized at once with awe and admiration.—I essayed to speak, but could not; when the vision thus addressed me:—“ I am Raphael, and come to “ thee, from the presence of that God before “ whose throne, I minister continually. This “ God, altho' thou fashionest thy life by justice, “ thou art far as yet from knowing as thou “ oughtest: but speedily, a time will come when “ thou shalt know him better. God has marked “ thy life of probity, though thou art only an

“ Idolater, and fends me to command thee hence. Yes, Abram, rise and leave thy father’s house, thy kindred, and thy country, for a land that God will point thee out; for he will cause thee to become a great and mighty nation, sundered from the unbelieving world, to worship him, while every other nation is immersed in wickedness, and such too as increases daily. He will likewise bless thee, while thyself shalt be a blessing; he will favour those who favour thee, and curse those tongues that may at any time curse thee: Nay, more; in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”—These were the Angel’s words; which having said, he vanish’d, leaving me much more astonished than at first.

Lot. And you were easily persuaded by this vision, not considering, in the interval, how you should come to be the father of a nation, when your wife is barren as you are?

Abram. Ah, nephew, since this vision, all my notions have been rectified. That circumstance is no impediment with God to the accomplishment of what he purposes.

Lot. But is this all?

Abram. Far from it. As you recollect, it was my father’s pleasure to go down into the land of Canaan. I went with him; for I thought

thought that to obey my father was not an attempt to counteract God's purpose. The old man, when he was full of honour, died in Haran by the way. I need not tell you that I took my wife and all my substance with me, to complete the journey my good father had intended, and that you, dear nephew, likewise with your substance, joined me. Into Canaan we came safe; and now prepare still more to be astonished.

Lot. I am listening.

Abram. The first night I slept in Canaan, God himself, that God whose worship I have happily adopted, giving up those gods of wood and stone you pray to with the rest of the Chaldeans.—Yes, dear nephew, God himself appeared before me in a vision, saying, “To thy seed I give this land,” and then he vanished.—I allow this visitation was not long, but it was heavenly.

Lot. But your leaving Canaan afterwards for Egypt, where we are at present, to avoid the misery of famine, and the orders you have recently received from Pharoah to depart,—these seem not to accord with such a promise of the land of Canaan.

Abram. Yes; for even on our expulsion hence, God's dealing with me is made visible. So will you say yourself, when you have heard what I have still to let you know. On my arrival in

this country, I bethought myself, that the conspicuous beauty of my wife might bring me into danger. As I feared, it happened : Pharoah, as you know, soon cast an eye upon her, and commanded she should instantly be brought before him. Upon that occasion, an idea struck me ; and I said to Sarai, at our parting, “ Seeing you, “ dear wife, are such a beauteous woman, it “ shall come to pass, that when the King be- “ holds you, he will say *you are my wife*, and “ kill me, but preserve your life. Say, there- “ fore, *you are nothing nearer to me than a sister*, “ as in fact you are my sister ; carefully suppress “ the name of wife, that for your sake it may go “ well with me, and then my soul shall live.”— She promised she would thus disguise the matter, and was taken into Pharoah’s house : but Pharoah has returned her now, and with this message, which, as soon as I received it, seemed to me another proof of God’s solicitude in my behalf ; and of the sure accomplishment of his great promise. “ What is this,” said Pharoah, “ you “ have done ? Why did you bid your wife con- “ ceal herself, and say she was your sister ? Ea- “ sily I might have married with her. But the “ God you worship has just told me every thing “ relating to her, in a dream ; and likewise, “ that for her sake have those plagues I have ex- “ perienced lately, visited my house ; take back

your

“ your wife then, and be gone from Egypt, with
“ whatever you call yours. Let not another
“ sun behold you loitering in my realm.”—
This, Lot, is what I had to mention. Judge,
then, if I have not reason to suppose, that the
Almighty’s finger is in these proceedings.

Lot. I have nothing to object. Both modesty
and duty keep me silent. In religious matters,
men I know are not so easily persuaded to re-
retract their notions. I still worship my first
gods, for they are what my country worships.
You have altered your religion. I subscribe not
to it; but refrain from blaming you for having
changed.—When I see cause for any change,
I will adopt it, but, till then, shall persevere,
as I have done already, in the way of my fore-
fathers. What you have thus told me of these
visitations I must own is strange; but men—
In short, there seems no arguing on religious
subjects; I have therefore done.—To-morrow
we quit Egypt, I suppose. Agreed;—for I
have every thing in readiness.

Abram. To-morrow, nephew, at the farthest,
and before the sun is up. Till when, fare-
well.

XV.

GENESIS xii.

ABRAM'S HISTORY CONTINUED.

AFTER the event recorded in the article preceding, Abram with his family, and Lot, departed from the land of Egypt to the south, till they arrived again at Canaan; but the land was not sufficient to subsist the numerous flocks they had; on which, it seems, that Abram's herdsmen, and his nephew's, had repeated quarrels with each other. This produced a friendly separation:—Abram choosing to remain in Canaan, and his nephew pitching in the land of Sodom, whose inhabitants were grievous sinners.

Hardly more than eight years time, or thereabouts, had passed away, since Abram's brother made this choice, before the country, with Gomorrah, was attacked by certain kings, and he, together with the rest of the inhabitants, made captive—Abram had no sooner got intelligence of this, than he assembled all his servants, and attacking the victorious party, rescued Lot.

He was not void of confidence in the Almighty's

mighty's promises ; but still, the thought of Sarai's barenness afflicted him ; God therefore frequently was pleased to raise his hopes with positive assurances that he should have an heir, proceeding, as the Scripture says, of his own body, to succeed him, and be followed by a generation no less numerous than the stars of heaven. This, the historian Moses tells us, Abram did not scruple to believe, and therefore his belief was counted to him just the same as righteousness.

However, to allay his joy on this occasion, God informed him, that his seed should all be strangers, that is, should be looked upon as such, and therefore undergo harsh treatment for a period of four hundred years and upward, in a land not theirs : but that the people of this land thus treating them with rigour, God would judge, and then deliver the oppressed. In proof of which, upon the very night this prophecy was uttered, the Almighty caused a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp to pass between the pieces of a sacrifice, that Abram had got ready, and disposed in order as an offering on the altar.

Things remained not long in such a situation, since we read, that though the faith of Abram was so perfectly established, that he could not doubt

doubt the Almighty would at last fulfil his promises, yet still his being childless, and the impossibility, as he conceived, that Sarai ever should present him with an heir, sat heavy on his heart ; nor was his wife without her share of grief on the occasion. Upon this account, their ardour and impatience to have children would have hastened the forbearance or delay of the Almighty in bestowing children on them.—(*Before Christ 1911 years*).

It appears that Sarai had an handmaid in her family, called Hagar, an Egyptian, whom she thought of, that her husband might no longer be in want of children. Abram, therefore, as the Scripture says, went in and lay with Hagar : but how well this scheme of hastening, or, perhaps, as we might rather say, of counteracting the Almighty's purposes succeeded, will be soon discovered.—Abram and his partner's ardour and impatience were occasioned by their ignorance, as human beings, of whatever was to pass in future ; but the Almighty is forbearing from his knowledge of futurity. Man knows not what shall happen, even on the morrow ; but God sees at once the several circumstances or events that shall take place through all eternity.

XVI.

GENESIS XVI.

THE ESCAPE OF HAGAR.

BEFORE CHRIST 1910.

SCENE. *A desert.*HAGAR (*in a thoughtful posture*).

O H, Heavens ! what will become of me ! I know not whither I shall turn for safety, and this desert will become my grave ! Why did I fly, as I have done, my mistress ? Certainly it would have been much better for me to endure her tauntings, than expose myself to die thus wretchedly by famine : but, alas ! Why did my mistress force me to so grievous a necessity ?—How ill agreed her last behaviour with her first ! Let me reflect upon it, if my mind will bear a recollection of the scene.—“ Hold,” said she to Abram, “ God in his good pleasure has forbid my having children. “ Take my handmaid, then, take Hagar ; ” and so saying, she presented me before him.—Fatal gift ! How fatal to my peace the present moment shews. “ It may be,” she went on, “ you will have children by her ; ” and to this my

my master hearkened. But at last, when she beheld the growing burthen of my womb, how were her language and behaviour changed, without one reason for such jealousy ! " My " wrong," said she, " ungrateful Hagar, be " upon thy head. I gave thee to thy master ; " and when first thou hadst conceived, I was " despised. God be the judge between us." Oh that God indeed would be the judge between us ; for what reason is there to suppose I should despise my mistress ? To the last, what was I save a servant ? but what said my master to all this ? Why, just as follows : Who would have believed it ? " She is in thy hand ; do " with her what thou wilt." Alas, not so did either of them speak when I was thought of as an instrument to take away my mistress's reproach among mankind, for being childless. What will therefore be my fate. I am with child, and where ? In this untrdden wilderness, where no one of my kind will ever come to give me victuals, or relieve my wretchedness. Ah me ! what shall I do in this forlorn condition !

Raphael (entering in the habit of a herdsman).
Hagar, Sarai's handmaid, whence canst thou have come, and whither, in this plight, canst thou be going ?

Hagar.

Hagar. Who thus names the miserable Hagar, just as if he knew her!

Raphael. Do I then not know thee? Who art thou, but that Egyptian who was lately Sarai's handmaid? and what is it but the fear of her resentment that has brought thee from her habitation, into this forlorn and savage wilderness?

Hagar. Who is it that thus speaks to me? —Oh, Sir, I can discern you are a prophet.

Raphael. I am more: I am the angel Raphael, and I minister at God's right hand for ever, or perform his errands in each quarter of the universe. Weep then no longer: for at present I am sent to bid thee hasten back, and be submissive to thy mistress.

Hagar. Is it possible! and does the Almighty then concern himself in favour of my misery!

Raphael. Yes, Hagar; and still more: he sends me to inform thee, that his Providence will bless the produce of thy womb, and multiply thy seed exceedingly; so much so, that in number it shall go beyond all computation.

Hagar. Am I then so happy?

Raphael. To the child thou goest with, thou art to give the name of Ishmael, since the Lord has heard the voice of thy affliction. He shall be a savage, living in the woods. His hand shall

shall be directed against every man, while every man's shall be directed against him, and he shall see his brethren flourish round about him.

Hagar. God be praised, that he hath looked on my distress: it is enough, and I return.

Raphael. But who shall guide thee? I will: —for to do so am I come. So lean upon my arm, and I will put thy steps into the way.

Hagar. Bless God, my soul, for he hath had compassion on me.

XVII.

GENESIS xviii.

ABRAHAM'S INTERCESSION FOR
SODOM.

BEFORE CHRIST 1897.

Abraham, whose late name was changed for that, and Sarai's too for Sarah, both by the command of God, received a positive assurance near about this time from the Almighty, that his wife, on the arrival of the usual time, should have a child, and was enjoined to circumcise his family and servants. This aforesaid circumcision was intended as a mark which God designed to set upon his people.

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so that they might keep themselves distinct in future times from other nations.

Abraham was nearly in his ninetieth year, when, on a certain day, as he was sitting in the door-way of his tent at noon, he lifted up his eyes, and saw an angel standing no great distance off; on which he ran to meet his guest, and bowed as they approached each other to the ground. The busines of this angel was, by his appearing, to confirm God's promise made already; namely, that his wife should bring him forth a son at the appointed time of women, reckoning from that day. His wife, who then was taken up in making préparations for the table, that her lord might treat the angel, heard this confirmation of God's promise, and could not refrain from bursting out into a laugh, that might be heard; conceiving it impossible that such a thing should come to pass, as that two people of their age should have a child; for this the angel chid her, but renewed the confirmation, asking if she fancied any thing could be too difficult for God to bring about. This being said, the conversation turned on other subjects, and the angel thus addressed himself to Abraham:—

“ Abraham, there is something else I have received in charge to mention; but the thing is of a dreadful kind indeed!”

Abraham.

Abraham. Say on, my lord.

The Angel. It was delivered me by God ; for thus said he on my departure : “ Shall I hide “ from Abraham what I mean to do, since he “ shall certainly become a great and mighty “ nation, and all people of the earth be blef-“ sed in him ? and since I know he will “ command his household, and his children “ after him, to keep the way of virtue ? Shall “ I hide my judgments from him, and parti-“ cularly in a thing that has respect to Lot, “ whom I have promised I will bless, because “ he is the kinsman of my servant ? No, I will “ not hide from Abraham what I mean to do.”

Abraham. Proceed, my lord : I am impatient till I know what dreadful thing the Almighty wills shall come to pass.

The Angel. The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is gone up before him, and their sins are so abominable, that they ought not to be named. God therefore by himself has sworn he will destroy those cities, and to-morrow will so mighty a destruction be accomplished. Yes, this present day will be the last complete one Sodom and Gomorrah are to have.

Abraham. Alas ! alas ! God's will be notwithstanding done : but will he punish all alike, the good as well as wicked ? Peradventure there are

fifty righteous in those cities. Shall destruction be *their* portion also? That be far from God to do.

The Angel. Oh, Abraham, he that is the Judge of all men, never will be found unjust. He will not therefore overwhelm the righteous with the wicked, but in punishment remember mercy. Nay, still more; if there be fifty righteous men in Sodom and Gomorrah, he will even spare both cities for their sake, and let the wicked live.

Abraham. Alas! if there should not be fifty righteous men, what will my poor unhappy kinsman do!

The Angel. Look, Abraham, God has promised to bless every one that blesses thee; and therefore Lot, as being of thy blood, is safe; and *that*, though two such wretched places finally be blotted out. When Sodom is destroyed, I have it in command to save thy kinsman, with his family and substance; fear not, then, on their account.

Abraham. Let me for ever bless such mercy shewn to men. And yet, though of his grace he spares my nephew, shall I therefore think no longer of the rest in Sodom and Gomorrah, more, perhaps, deserving mercy than my kinsman, and not less unhappy?—If there are not fifty righteous in them, shall all perish?—I am only dust and ashes; yet, if God—

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The Angel. What wouldest thou say?—If God—

Abraham. If God were not offended at my thus presuming, I would say: “Behold I take upon myself to plead for these unhappy cities: “Peradventure of the fifty righteous, there lack five; will God destroy them if there lack but five?”

The Angel. If five-and-forty righteous men are found in Sodom and Gomorrah, he will spare them.

Abraham. His compassion gives me courage to proceed. If there be forty righteous men therein?

The Angel. For forty he will not destroy them.

Abraham. Oh, let not the Lord be angry, nor yet thou, my heavenly guest, if I still speak.—Should thirty righteous be in Sodom and Gomorrah?

The Angel. Granting there be even thirty, they are safe from danger.

Abraham. Their offences must be great indeed, if they contain not thirty righteous people. And yet who can tell?—There may be found, however, twenty.

The Angel. If there should be twenty, they shall stand.

Abraham. Once more will I presume to speak. If there be only ten.

The Angel. If there be only ten, God's mercy for

for the sake of ten will not complete his purpose upon either place. Farewell ! Let Lot be in the hands of God. When on the morrow he is heard of, it will be that he is safe. And yet, how thankless will not Lot evince himself for so much mercy granted him.—Once more, farewell !

And here they parted : these last words referring to the horrid crime which was committed afterwards by Lot, in lying with his daughters. See the five last verses of the 19th chapter of the Book of Genesis.

XVIII.

GENESIS xix.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM
AND GOMORRAH.

BEFORE CHRIST 1898.

SCENE. *The fields contiguous to a city.**The ANGEL conducting LOT.**The ANGEL.*

THY wife and children are in safety ; for by this, they must have reached the mountain. Flee thou likewise thither, but be speedy ; for thy life depends upon it. Look not once behind thee, therefore, neither tarry in the plain ; for see, the Lord is raining fire and brimstone

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out of heaven on Sodom and Gomorrah, while the smoke ascends as from a furnace. Flee then once again. Flee to the mountain.

Lot. Oh, not so, my lord. Behold thy servant has found grace and favour in God's sight, and he has magnified his mercy in delivering me from such a dreadful conflagration. But I cannot think of fleeing to the mountain, lest some evil overtake me, and I die.

The Angel. What dost thou mean?

Lot. Alas! must every city in the plain be overthrown? the Almighty has preserved my life for Abraham's sake. Let me then plead for mercy upon others. Yonder, half way towards the mountain, lies a city. Let me flee to that. My wife and children may come thither to me. Is it not a very little city? Let me only flee to Zoar, and my soul shall live.

The Angel. Well, God accepts thy prayer, as well as Abraham's, and will save the place for which thou intercedest. Flee thou to this Zoar, and thy wife and daughter shall come to thee thither. Haste, make haste, or certainly the fire will overtake thee.

Lot. Yes, I feel the heat thereof, though at this distance, and will flee as fast as I am able. Miserable Sodom and Gomorrah!

XIX.

GENESIS XX.

SEQUEL OF ABRAHAM'S HISTORY.

ABRAHAM, after the destruction just before recited, went to dwell at Gerar, where, to save his life from danger, he gave out, as formerly, that Sarah was his sister, and no otherwise related to him; for Abimelech, the king of Gerar, sent to see her, of which interview the issue was, that he detained her in his palace. God, however, after having visited Abimelech with plagues, by closing up the womb of every female in his house, for thus detaining Sarah, warned him in a dream, at last, to give her up to Abraham, who was really her husband. This, Abimelech complied with; but reproved them both for having thus concealed their marriage. Abraham made the best excuse he could, and prayed that God would take away the curse, with which, on his account, he had thought fit to plague Abimelech.

And now about this time [before Christ 1892] the promised child was born to Abraham, which at eight days old he circumcised, and called him Isaac. Sarah, having now an heir, could not

refrain from looking with a sort of jealousy on Ishmael, Hagar's son ; and went so far as to require that Abraham should put away the child, together with its mother, so that she might never see them more. " Cast out," said she, " this woman and her son, for he shall never be a fellow-heir with Isaac." Such a requisition we may reasonably think affected Abraham, as being father to the little one : he loved it very much ; but God bade Abraham not be grieved, but do as Sarah bade him, since his Providence would be a friend to Hagar and her child, which last, because it was the son of Abraham, he would make to be the father of a nation. Abraham, upon this, as we may read, rose early in the morning, and took bread, together with some water in a bottle, and gave both to Hagar, sending her away. Accordingly the mother, with her infant, left him, and betook herself in sorrow to a neighbouring wilderness.

XX.

GENESIS xxi.

HAGAR IN THE WILDERNESS.

BEFORE CHRIST 1892.

HAGAR, and the little ISHMAEL in her arms.

HAGAR.

ALAS! I have been travelling hard these three days, and through paths that none but beasts have ever trod before me! How will my affliction end! Compelled at first to quit my master, but now sent away by him that should have saved me from a jealous mistress! What am I to do? The bread his cold compassion gave me at our parting is not yet all gone; but for the water—Why was I so careless as to leave it where my Ishmael, with his little feet, could kick it down, while I was sleeping? Sometimes I am half inclined to chide him for the action, that has thus deprived me of this precious part of my subsistence, notwithstanding he is blameless. Rather should I tax my thoughtlessness for having put the bottle, as I did, within his reach. I am myself alone the reason of that miserable death I shall in-

evitably undergo, for want of drink, in this same parched and barren wilderness. Already I am fainting, while my Ishmael is thus calm and sleeping in my arms. Poor babe! let me complain then while thou sleepest; for should I weep when thou art waking, thou wouldst view me with a smile, not knowing that the fountain of thy life is utterly exhausted in my breast. In such a situation then, I cannot see thee smile, but it must penetrate me to the heart to view thee, and consider that the moment is advancing, when, in want of its accustomed nourishment, thy tender body will be cruelly convulsed, while thou art sleeping now, and equally unconscious of thy wretched situation as the new born little one now lying in the lap of plenty under thy hard father's roof. Unfeeling mistress, to conspire against a child, who could not know thou wert his enemy! thy triumph would have been complete, hadst thou delayed till he had sense to notice what was doing round about him: for in that case, sure of being understood, thou mightst have told him who it was that thrust him forth. Poor object! and still much more pitiable, inasmuch as all thy sufferings are as yet to be endured, before a lingering death dismisses thee! Sleep on; for shouldst thou wake, and cry for milk,

thy

thy wretched mother has none left to give thee. Miserable day ! Before, when I went forth a willing fugitive, I looked upon it as a happiness that heaven relieved me by the intervention of its angel, who persuaded my return, and shewed the way. But now, should heaven again be gracious, and once more dispatch its angel to my aid, I have no home to which he could conduct me. I am, therefore, hopeless, and both of us unavoidably must die. Why do I then continue thus to fold in my embrace the melancholy little object, that at last I shall not have sufficient strength to carry, but must drop in spite of all a mother's efforts still to hold him, and that moment fall myself. Let me at once then give him up. I shall not, by such separation, hasten the poor infant's death. I shall but save myself the pangs of looking on while he expires. Great God ! give me but strength to go through this last part, and I will thank the mercy that thus softens my hard fortune. I will make him up a bed of these dry leaves, and then go from him. (*She collects the scattered stubble, and then lays the infant down.*) Heaven be praised, the melancholy business is half done, and he has not awaked. I go. Farewell, poor babe, for ever !—But go whither ?—Go, where I may not behold my Ishmael die, where I may not even hear him shriek, while famine writhes

his little frame. Oh Providence ! my child, my child ! I brought thee forth in sorrow ; but had hope. I give thee up in anguish, but have now no hope. Oh, gracious God, take pity on me. Hear my supplication, while as yet I have it in my power to pray ; for soon will my parched tongue lose all its utterance. But what need have I for words. Let me but crawl to yonder thicket, and there die. How would it benefit my lamb, should I be by him when he breathes his little soul out.

Raphael (entering to her). Hagar ! Hagar ! Stop ! Come back !

Hagar. Was that a voice I heard ?

Raphael. Yes, Hagar. This way. Turn and hear me.

Hagar. Gracious God ! and is it possible ? Am I so blessed, that heaven has once again had pity on me ? Has he once more sent his angel to relieve me ?

Raphael. Heaven has once again had pity on you, and your child. Weep then no more ; for Ishmael's safety is what God will certainly provide for. Thou art famishing with thirst, and here is water. (*He removes the bushes, and points out a rill of water.*)

Hagar. Oh, my Lord ? Oh heaven ! I have still strength sufficient to fall down and drink, till I have satisfied my fainting soul !

Raphael.

Raphael. Thus is it heaven will always be a parent or husband to the fatherless and widow, and particularly so to Ishmael, and his deserted mother. Art thou satisfied? Drink not too much at once, however; but fill up thy bottle, which, together with the bread thou hast remaining, shall at no time fail, till thou hast reached the place where God designs thee to take up thy dwelling.

Hagar. O what words shall I employ to speak my gratitude!

Raphael. That gratitude, which is an inmate of the heart God looks for, so that words are useless. Thank then God in silence, and take up the child; and whilst thou holdst him in thy arms, will I inform thee what it is the Almighty's purpose to do for him. He shall be the father of a nation. For the present time, establish thy abode at Paran in the desert, and rely on heaven's protection. When the child is grown to years of manhood, let him take a wife in Egypt. Farewell! Go in peace, for God will guide thee safe to Paran, nor till then, or after, shalt thou want for food or drink. Once more farewell, and to the winds resign thy sorrow.

Hagar. I am lost in joy, and never was I happy till this moment!

XXI.

GENESIS XXII.

THE TRIAL OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH.

SCENE. *A woodland country.*

BEFORE CHRIST 1872.

ABRAHAM and ISAAC with a lamp and wood.

ABRAHAM.

THIS is the place, dear Isaac. Here pile
up the wood ; while I, as I have need,
withdraw a little space and think.

Isaac (while his father is withdrawing).
What can this mean ? I never saw my father
so till now.

*Abraham (at a little distance, and while Isaac
piles the wood up for an altar).* Was it the voice
of God I heard then ! “ Take thy son, that
“ only son of thine, that Isaac thou so lovest,
“ and depart into the land of Moriah, that
“ when there, thou mayst present him to me
“ as a sacrifice, upon the mountain I shall tell
“ thee of.” Was it, I say, God’s voice, or
only a delusion ? It was no delusion ; but the
self-same gracious voice that twenty years ago
and upwards spoke, and promised me this son,
this

this only son of mine, this Isaac I so love. And do I pay obedience to the voice? I do. It was God gave, and it is God that may with justice take away. He promised me a wide extent of country, and to every people in the world, a blessing through my means. His words were, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” And shall I take the good from my Creator, but refuse what I think evil? Yet, if Isaac be torn from me, how shall I have seed to bless the nations? God will give me seed, nor shall I, notwithstanding my old age, go childless to the grave. Relying on this consolation, I can finish the affecting business that must now be done; but what will be thy thoughts, beloved child, when I proceed to such an act of violence upon thy tender frame, which, on the other hand, I should protect from every harm? Alas! at what a price does not thy father prove that faith he has in God, and that obedience he acknowledges due to him! Dear, dear Isaac! Thou shalt be an angel in the courts of God, and I in future follow thee, I trust, though now, like an unnatural father in men’s eyes, I am upon the point of lifting up my hand against thee, to pour out thy unoffending blood. But he has finished——

Isaac. There, dear father, it is done, as you directed me: yet, after all, what do you mean

to do? I see, indeed, the fire and wood; but where may be the lamb to offer?

Abraham. Oh, my son! my Isaac! God, be-sure, who claims an offering, will provide himself a lamb, that we may sacrifice it.

Isaac. Do I understand you, father? No; but, on the other hand, the more I think, the more am I perplexed. Why are you thoughtful thus? Nay, why do you shed tears? You stand embarrassed. Though the business of a sacrifice be solemn, you are more than solemn. When we parted with our company, you said, "Stay here, while I, together with the lad, go yonder up the hill, and we will then return to you again;" but in so saying, you seemed sad and heavy, nay, turned from us to blot out a tear. Oh, father! what then moves you? Say why you are thus depressed and gloomy, if you love me.

Abraham. If I love you! Witness, that I do, these tears, beloved Isaac, that thus flow on your account, for you are the occasion of them.

Isaac. I the occasion of them!

Abraham (aside). Surely God will not less graciously accept my sacrifice, if I dispatch him now, than if he were disposed in order on the altar, and there slain: from this consideration, therefore, will I pour his blood out while he stands before me now, for should I listen while he

he speaks the plea of nature in a father's bosom
will disarm me, and my faith in the Almighty
fail. (*Feeling for the knife*). Oh heaven! to
what a piteous state am I reduced! yet, notwithstanding,
die, dear Isaac!

A Voice (from One above unseen, when Abraham has lifted up his arm to strike). Abraham! Abraham!

Abraham. What may that voice be that calls
Abraham.

The Voice. It is God's, delivered by his messenger. Thou canst not see his face; but be content, that he informs thee of the Almighty's pleasure. Lay not then thy hand upon the lad, nor do him any evil; for God knows by this thou fearest him, since thou hast not withheld thy son, thy only son, thine Isaac from him: therefore, by himself, has the Almighty sworn that he will bless thee, and like sand upon the shore, increase thy seed, that shall possess the dwelling place of all thine enemies. Desist then from this horrid sacrifice, which the Almighty never looked for, only as the attestation of thy faith, and visit yonder thicket, where a ram, as thou wilt find, is hampered by the horns. Go thither, Abraham, and let him be now the sacrifice, instead of that dear Isaac thy unshaken faith and duty had prepared. No more.

Abraham. Speak still, thou unseen messenger,
sent

sent to me from a God of grace. Speak still ; but he has uttered his great errand ; and the cloud, in which he was concealed, has lost already half its brightness. Oh my Isaac, that as soon as thou discerndst thyself the victim wast redeemed from being so, how much I tremble at the idea of the danger thou wast in of dying, now that it is past. Thou tremblest too thyself at the idea ; but what wonder that !—

Isaac. I do, indeed, dear father ; but shall soon recover from my fright.

Abraham. Lean on my arm, and let us go together for this ram, which we will offer up, and pour our thanks out when before the altar : thou my son, that the Almighty has preserved thy life, and I thy father, that—I have not lost myself.

XXII.

GENESIS xxiii.

ABRAHAM'S PURCHASE OF A BURY- ING PLACE.

BEFORE CHRIST 1860.

ISAAC, twelve years after the preceding matter, having then attained the age of nearly forty, lost his mother, who, as Scripture tells us, died

died at Hebron, in the land of Canaan, aged six score years and upward. Abraham, upon this occasion purchased for his family a burial place, which purchase is in substance thus related.

“ All mankind must die,” said Abraham to the sons of Heth, assembled at the gate of Hebron, which, as just now mentioned, was their city. “ The beloved partner of my life, my Sarah, is deceased, while I myself am old, and daily look for death. Are we not then all strangers in the world, since we possess it only for a season, and no more are heard of afterward? But I am not *that* only, but a stranger in the city where I make my dwelling. Let me then secure myself a burial place, ye sons of Heth, for I am nothing but a sojourner among you, and my Sarah shall repose therein, till I am summoned likewise; so that my last wishes to sleep with her in the grave may not be disappointed.”

An Elder (rising). Hear me, my good lord. Thou art a mighty prince among us. Chuse then any of our sepulchres, and may thy wife, thy Sarah, sleep in peace within it, till such time,—but may that time be yet a great way off—when, full of years and honour, thou rejoin her.

Abraham. To the ground I bow myself for these good wishes. Hear me, therefore, and entreat in my behalf the princely Ephron, son of

Zohar,

Zohar, that he sell me for a price the field, that has the cavern of Macpelah in it, for a burying place among you.

Ephron. I am here to answer, my good lord ; and in the presence of my people, give thee what thou askest. I bestow upon thee, without price, the cavern of Macpelah. Let thy wife be laid at rest therein ; and afterward possess it as a sepulchre among us.

Abraham. Nay, but I will give thee money for it. Let me show my people of how little worth is the abundance of this world, since all the use to which it can be put, is to procure the rich a grave ; excepting which, at last, they shall have nothing to call theirs.

Ephron. If it be so then, hear me ; for the land is worth four hundred shekels told in silver, current money with the merchant ; but what difference can that trifle make between us. Bury first thy wife, and we will after settle with each other, when the price is to be paid.

Abraham. I am content. Make the possession certain to me, and then welcome death ; for I am sure of sleeping with the partner of my life, for whose sake only life has been a blessing to me.

And so saying, Abraham, bowing to the ground, departed, and the assembly afterward broke up.

XXIII.

GENESIS xxiv.

THE BETROTHING OF REBECCA.

BEFORE CHRIST 1857.

SCENE. *The country, with a well of water in it, not far distant from a town.*

ABRAHAM's servant entering.

YONDER is the town where Nahor dwells, the brother of my master. I have made safe disposition of my camels, and enjoy some opportunity for thinking now.—I put my hand beneath my master's thigh, and swore I would not chuse a wife for Isaac of the Canaanitish women, but come hither for that purpose, to the country where his kindred live. I have been prosperous in my journey ; for, indeed, my master said, the Lord would send his angel with me. Speed then, Lord, the business I have still in hand, for Abraham's sake. Behold, I place myself here close beside this well, and soon the daughters of the people will be here for water. Let it come to pass, I pray thee, that the damsel thou hast willed shall fall to Isaac as his wife, may ask me of her own accord if I want drink, and

and offer likewise to draw water for my camels ; so shall I be certain thou wilt show my master kindness ; but the watering time is come, and I behold the women of the place draw nigh. (*Several women come for water, draw it, and return, till last of all Rebecca comes.*)

The Servant. If God has listened to the prayer I made, not one of these is for my master's son ; but what fair damsel is this last ? Her eye is fixed upon me.

Rebecca. Who are you ? The camels I observed without, are surely yours. Besides, your dress bespeaks you a wayfaring man, and possibly you may be thirsty. Stay, for I will give you water from my pitcher, and then wait upon your camels.

The Servant (taking from his pocket ear rings and a pair of bracelets for Rebecca). Blessed be the God of Abraham, who has thus far shown me kindness. Tell me, pray, who is your father ?

Rebecca. Rather tell me first, who you are that have asked me such a question.

The Servant. For a very urgent reason do I ask. If, therefore, I find favour in your sight, delay not to make answer.

Rebecca. There is something in your countenance that forces my reply. I am the daughter of one Bethuel living here, and Nahor is my father's father.

The

The Servant. Once more blessed be the God of Abraham, who hath brought me to his kinsfolk's dwelling. For your uncle's sake, then, take these jewels. Let me put them in your ears and on your arms.

Rebecca. These jewels for my uncle's sake ! What means this mystery ? but why should I refuse a present offered me so graciously ?

The Servant (putting them on). There is no reason to refuse, and more particularly after you have heard the whole : but first inform me, can I see your father ? I am pressed for time till I return. Where is he ?

Rebecca. At the sheep-folds with my brother Laban. I will run and fetch him.

The Servant. Do ; but fail not to return yourself.—(*After Rebecca is gone out.*) A fairer or more courteous damsel never have I seen. The Lord hath been my guide indeed, and prospered what my master bade me take in hand. But do I not behold her father at the sheep-folds, as she said ? It must be Bethuel, and no other. Yes ; for now I see a second with him, and that second can be only Laban. I will not wait here, but follow where they are. So shall I finish the affair more speedily, and hasten back on my return.

XXIV. XXV.

GENESIS XXV.

THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM, AND THE
BIRTH OF TWINS TO ISAAC.

BEFORE CHRIST 1837.

THE servant having told Rebecca's parents what his business was, obtained their daughter as a wife for Isaac. Every thing was settled on the spot for her departure with the servant ; and arriving in the land of Canaan, Isaac and Rebecca were soon after married. Abraham survived this marriage five and thirty years, and had six other children by another wife, called Keturah. He died, at length, an hundred three score and twelve years of age ; and by his own direction, Isaac buried him with Sarah, in the cavern of Macpelah.

Isaac and Rebecca lived together many years, and had no child, Rebecca being barren. Isaac therefore prayed to have an offspring, and the Lord, who willed that through the seed of Abraham a deliverer should appear to save mankind, was not unmoved by his intreaty. In the end, Rebecca found she was with child, and feeling more than ordinary pains, was told by the Almighty

mighty that her womb contained two nations ; one of which should be much stronger than the other ; and the elder child within her be a servant to the younger. In the sequel, Isaac's wife accordingly had twins, of which the first born son received the name of Esau, and the latter that of Jacob. In those days a great respect was paid to primogeniture ; that is, the circumstance of being first born in a family. Now Isaac, it appears, loved Esau most, but Jacob was the mother's favourite. Furthermore, we learn from Scripture, that the elder (Esau), when grown up to years of manhood, was a cunning hunter, who used frequently to get his father venison, which he ate of, and on that account was partial to him ; but that Jacob was a man of plain behaviour, living, as the historian says, in tents.

XXVI.

GENESIS XXV. 30.

THE SALE OF ESAU'S BIRTH-RIGHT.

BEFORE CHRIST 1805.

VERY little is recorded in the sacred books of Esau or his brother, during Isaac's life time ; or indeed of Isaac. Esau, it appears, was

was one day taken ill, and coming home dispirited, or weary, from the field, when Jacob was preparing pottage for his dinner, wished to have some. To this wish of Esau, Jacob would not probably consent, but on condition. Taking, therefore, the advantage he enjoyed by reason of his brother's illness, “sell me now thy birth-right,” or the privilege thereof, was his proposal. Esau, upon this, reflecting he was like to die, and should derive no gain from primogeniture, agreed with Jacob to give up his title as the elder, for a meal: and thus, says Moses, he despised his birth-right, which, in ancient days, was highly reckoned on; and, therefore, to part with it, could not but be thought a grievous crime. St. Paul, indeed, has greatly stigmatised this act of Esau, in the 12th of his Epistle to the Hebrews, where he says, *lest there be any prophane persons among you, as Esau, who, for one morsel of bread, sold his birth-right.* But, in truth, it would, at present, be a very sordid thing, if any youth should part with those comparatively-speaking few advantages he has, by being first born to his parents.

XXVII.

GENESIS XXVI.

THE HISTORY OF ISAAC'S LIFE.

BEFORE CHRIST 1804.

THIS article may be comprised within a very narrow compass. Added to the famine that had been the cause of Abraham's sojournment in Egypt, there ensued another in the life of Isaac ; but the Lord admonished him not to transfer his dwelling place to Egypt, as his father had before him done, but fix in Gerar of the Philistines, where Abraham himself had lived some little space of time ; for “ I will multiply thy seed,” said God, “ and give them all these countries, where thou art at present, since thy father always did what I commanded him.”

To Gerar, therefore, he removed ; and here again, like Abraham, Isaac was alarmed by reason of Rebecca's beauty, and in imitation of his father's conduct, twice before, gave out she was his sister : but their marriage being soon discovered, king Abimelech reproved such double conduct, but allowed him to remain in Gerar, where his flocks increased surprisingly. This circumstance caused frequent quarrels to ensue

between

between him and the Philistines, the wells of water being insufficient to subsist his flocks and theirs. And this is all we find related in the sacred books concerning Isaac, till such time as the event recorded in the following article took place.

XXVIII.

GENESIS xxvii.

THE FRAUD OF JACOB TO OBTAIN
HIS FATHER'S BLESSING.

BEFORE CHRIST 1760.

SCENE. *A sick apartment.*REBECCA *entering with JACOB.*

REBECCA.

COME hither, Jacob ; but tread softly, lest your father overhear us.

Jacob. Well, I do, dear mother : and what is it you would say ?

Rebecca. Your father sent not long ago to speak with Esau, and said to him, for I overheard the whole.—“ Alas, dear Esau, I am old, and cannot tell how little time I have to live. Take then your quiver, and go out, and having killed a doe, make savoury meat thereof, such as you know

“ know I love, and bring it me, that I may
“ satisfy my longings, and then bless you e'er
“ I die; for certainly I have not many hours
“ to live.” This, Esau had no sooner heard,
but he obeyed, and now is gone to hunt. Obey
my voice then, Jacob, if you love me, or even
love yourself.

Jacob. What would you have me do?

Rebecca. What but obtain this brother's bles-
sing for yourself, dear Jacob!

Jacob. But how that?

Rebecca. Thus Jacob: hear the whole, and
let the love with which you view your mother
be encreased, when you shall find how she has
been providing for you. Early in the morning
did I overhear this conversation pass between
them of the venison, which your father's favou-
rite, Esau, and no other, is to get him ready;
and directly went to work beforehand, took two
kids, and killed them. They are seething while
we speak, and nearly ready, if not quite so.
Hasten then, dear Jacob, and pour out, that
you may carry this same savoury meat, and give
it your sick father; so shall he pronounce a
blessing on your head before he dies, instead of
Esau's.

Jacob. But my brother is a hairy man. My
father probably will feel me, and discovering

I deceive him, will denounce a curse, instead of blessing, on me.

Rebecca. True, he would so; and for that, I have made preparation likewise. There are goats' skins properly cut out within; put them upon your neck and hands. Put on your brother's raiment likewise. You will find the dress he wore some little time ago laid ready, with the goats' skins. Do as I advise, and having taken this precaution, let the curse you stand in fear of be upon my head.

Jacob. Come, mother, I obey you. Every thing you say is ready?

Rebecca. Yes, and placed in order. You have only to put forth your hand, and take them up. Quick, then, or Esau may return.—(*After Jacob is gone out.*) Why do I love my Jacob more than Esau? Is it that he came forth last into the world, and consequently caused me greater anguish than his brother did? or is it that this last gave up his birth-right for a meal? Oh, children, you that shall be told in future time this partiality of conduct, do not blame; but imitate it: and let just the same contention be among you, to love more your father than your mother, or your mother than your father, and the consequence must prove, that they will both be happy. From such rivalry of love in families,

milies, no evil can ensue, but good ; for though I love my Jacob, I am, notwithstanding, Esau's mother, and can never hate him, being, as he is, my child. He has, however, parted with his privileges as the elder born : and shall a father's blessing on his death-bed not accompany the right he has devolved on Jacob ?—But I see him coming with the pottage.—(*To Jacob coming in*). Every thing is as it should be, and exactly have you done as I directed. Go then to your father, while I wait concealed behind here in this corner. Go, and prosper. (*Rebecca retires, and Jacob, passing to the further corner of the room, draws back a curtain*).

Jacob. Father ! father !

Isaac (*rising in his bed*). Well.—I hear a voice. Who are you ?

Jacob. I am Esau, my dear father's first-born. I have done as you commanded. Sit and eat then of my venison, that your soul may bless me.

Isaac. But how is it you are back so soon ?

Jacob. Because the Lord, while I was hunting, aimed my weapons.

Isaac. So indeed it must be : but come near that I may feel you, and find out if you are verily my Esau, my first-born, or not.—I hold you by the hand, and kiss your neck ; but know not what to think. The voice seems Jacob's,

while the rest is Esau's: but, alas! my hearing is impaired, together with my eye-sight; and you cannot but be Esau. Keep still near me, while I kiss you ten times over: for a goodly smell arises from your raiment; and by that I know you are my first-born. It is like the smell proceeding from a field, which God has blessed. May he bestow the dews of heaven and fatness of the earth upon you, with large store of corn and wine. May nations serve you. May your brethren call you master, and your mother's sons bow down when they approach your presence. Cursed may he be who curses you, and blessed he who blesses you.

Jacob. Thanks, father; but now sit and eat little of my venison, that your soul may be refreshed.

Isaac. Not now, dear son. I am not so disposed at present, but shall be so quickly. Put it on the seat, and for a moment leave me. I should like to be alone. A flood of tenderness comes over me in your behalf, dear Esau, and I am not master of myself. Leave me at present, and, anon, when I am calmer, I will send for you again to comfort me.

Jacob. I go, dear father, and will wait till then without. Farewell. (*Going.*)

Isaac. Farewell, dear Esau.

Jacob.

Jacob (coming back). Soft, I had forgot to draw the curtain.—(*He draws it*).

Rebecca (coming from the corner). I have witnessed every word, dear son, nor could you have concluded at a fitter moment, for I hear your brother coming. Softly; this way with me. From this hiding-place we shall be able to hear every thing, and find how Esau will endure his disappointment.

Esau (entering with venison). I have had good fortune, and made savoury meat, such as I know my father will be pleased with; but I think he sleeps, and therefore must awake him.—(*Undrawing the curtain*). Father, my dear father!

Isaac. Well, who calls? what is the matter?

Esau. Rise, dear father: I have brought this venison. Rise then, eat, and be refreshed, that you may bless me.

Isaac. Who can you be?

Esau. Who, but Esau? who, but your dear first-born?

Isaac. I am seized all over with a fit of trembling! Who, and where is he that hath before-hand brought me venison! Yea, my son; for you may see it on the seat before you: in return for which, I have affectionately blessed him, and he shall be blessed.

Esau. This is my brother's work ; but what of that : though you have blessed him, bless me likewise, father.

Isaac. He has been so subtle as to come before you, and purloin your blessing.

Esau. Therefore does he not deserve the name of Jacob, being a supplanter ? Twice hath he defrauded me : he took away my birth-right first, and now has he obtained my blessing : but, alas ! dear father, have you not reserved then one for me ?

Isaac. How shall I answer ? You and all your brethren have I made his servants, and with corn and wine sustained him. After this, what can I do for you, dear son ?

Esau. But have you in reality no blessing left ? Oh, father ! bless me likewise.

Isaac. Dry your tears up, my beloved son, my first-born ; for behold your dwelling shall have fruitful fields about it, and heaven's dew come down to feed them. By your sword shall you subsist ; and though you serve your brother, your subjection shall be only for a time ; for long it shall not be, before you throw his yoke off.—You are discomposed, dear son ; so too am I ; but be at peace ; and that I likewise may resume my spirits, leave me, but take with you Jacob's venison. I will eat of none but your's.

I bade

I bade your brother leave me, saying, I would quickly call to have him in again. Now I revoke my promise, and will send for you. Be calm ; rely on my affection, and depart. The light offends me.

Esau. I obey, but am impatient to be sent for.—(*In a whisper after he has drawn the curtain.*) Thus does Jacob always circumvent me ; but my father cannot live ; and, therefore, when the days of mourning for him are arrived, and every thing is in confusion, will I kill this brother, who has cunningly contrived to steal my birth-right and my blessing.—(*He goes out.*)

REBECCA *re-appears with JACOB.*

Rebecca. It was well we watched. The danger you are in will not permit us to lose time : flee then while breath is in you : flee to Haran, where my brother Laban lives, and tarry there till Esau's anger turn away, and he forget. Obey my voice, dear Jacob, lest not only I become a widow, but behold my sorrow aggravated by your loss, and have the untoward Esau only left me. Come, dear Jacob, for the moments now are precious.

Jacob. I know not what all this will come to, but obey.

XXIX. XXX.

GENESIS XXVIII. XXIX.

JACOB'S VISION AND HIS MARRIAGE.

BEFORE CHRIST 1752.

SCENE. *A room in Laban's house.*

JACOB.

EIGHT years are going on since first I left my father's house in Canaan, to avoid the violence of Esau ; and the promises of God are all fulfilled in my behalf : those promises that were so often made before to Abraham, namely, that in him should all the nations of the earth be blessed ; which blessing, it appears, is to flow down among mankind through me, and not through Esau's children. Esau has incurred the forfeiture of primogeniture, which for a meal, prepared according to his taste, he sold ; and lest this should not be sufficient to estrange his father's bosom, he hath done much worse ; for when he learnt that on my setting out I had been blessed a second time, and charged by no means to select a wife in Canaan, did he go, as if in spite, and wedded with Mahalath, Ishmael's daughter ; yea, the daughter of that son

to

to Abraham, whom, together with his mother, Abraham had cast out. Of which proceeding, the result is this: that the Almighty's promise in my favour stands confirmed, since Esau cannot possibly inherit. So that though I love my brother, notwithstanding his unkindness, still I cannot but rejoice, that through *my* seed all nations of the earth are to receive God's blessing promised them, and not through *his*. This promise, after having been repeatedly announced to Abraham, was renewed to me at Luz seven years ago, as I was fleeing hither; for behold I slept upon the journey, and a ladder stood before me, reaching quite to heaven, with angels that went up and down upon it; and above, the Lord himself, who said, "I am the God of Abraham, and thy father. All the place whereon thou sleepest will I give thy seed, which shall be no less numerous than the sands; and as for thee, though thou art going now to Haran, I will constantly be with thee, and protected by my arm, shalt thou return." On this I woke, and was afraid, by reason of the vision; yet the spirit of that God, whom I had seen in sleep, inspired me to cry out, "How awful is this place! This surely is no other than the house of God, and gate of heaven!" Confiding on the heavenly apparition, I set forward, and pursued

my journey till I reached this place, and lo, the first I met with was the wife that yesterday I wedded, Rachel, my dear mother's brother's child ; I loved her, and agreed with Laban to become his servant for seven years, if only upon such condition I might wed the maid. My offer was agreed to, and last night, the covenant-ed period being over, I was married. Oh what happy tidings these, when I return to Canaan, and rejoice my parents' bosoms ! What will be my father's feelings, when I set my wife before him, so that he may bless her, and return God thanks, that to experience such a happy meet-ing, he was saved from that indisposition, which seven years ago had almost brought him to the grave ! But I suppress my transports, since my wife, her father, and his other daughter, are approaching.

To him enter LABAN, LEAH, and RACHEL.

Jacob. Oh, my Rachel, may the blessings of the morning be upon you. I —

Laban. No longer now must we deceive you, nephew. This (*shewing Leah*) is in reality your wife, and she has been the partner of your bed. The mask, it is our country's custom for the virgin to have on when wedded, favoured the deception : but it must not now go further.

Jacob. Favoured the deception ! What, pray, mean you ? And is this my wife, your elder daughter,

daughter, Leah? But I see the ring which I imagined I gave Rachel. It is now upon her finger. Why have you beguiled me, Laban? I have been your servant these seven years, remember, and that too for Rachel.

Laban. Be contented, nephew. This must be your wife. If she were quick of speech, she would inform you that it never was the custom of our land to give away the younger daughter, while the first-born is without a husband. Yet if still you wish for Rachel, I could point you out a way.

Jacob. If I still wish for Rachel? Point me out your way, and you shall see then if I wish, or do not wish to have her. I have served you for her, as I said already, seven long years; long I must call them, since the prize I find is to be taken from me. Tell me, notwithstanding, what must still be done, to merit such a treasure as my heart is set on?

Laban. Hear me then, dear son-in-law; and if when I have settled the conditions, and you faithfully fulfilled them, I depart a second time from my engagements, may I suffer any punishment the Deity you worship shall pronounce upon my sin.

Jacob. Well, say then what are the conditions?

Laban. I was going to assign them. You have been my servant these seven years for Rachel,

I confess ; and if our country's custom would have suffered me to give away my younger child before the elder, I should never have retracted my agreement. Serve me then seven other years, and Rachel shall be your's, as well as Leah. You shall have them both, and may your God inspire you to deal kindly by them.

Jacob (aside). How has my dear Rachel been supplanted in this matter, and myself deluded likewise, having this weak-sighted Leah thrust upon me in her sister's stead, whose eye, as often as I caught it, cherished, while the winking Leah's hurt me ! I shall never love her. But perhaps this artifice is meant by way of punishment for those I put before upon my brother Esau, when I got possession of his birth-right, and our father's blessing. What then if I part with Leah.—But I must not, in that case, have Rachel.

Laban. Well, what answer do you give me, nephew ?

Jacob. I am thinking. Did you say seven years ?

Laban. Even so.

Jacob. But, Rachel, will not you draw nigh, and give me consolation ; or perhaps you are not hurt or disappointed by this imposition of a sister in your place ? Am I so wretched as that comes to, that the expression of your past anxiety

to

to have my service over, should be all—(forgive the term, dear Rachel) all dissimulation?

Rachel. Speak not, I beseech you, in this manner. Tenderly you wo^{od} me, and no less sincerely did I listen to you. But a father's will is here the obstruction to my happiness. Would you have had me disobey him? Not till yesterday was I aware, dear Jacob, that if ever I am blessed, it cannot be before seven other years are over, in addition to those seven preceding, during which I have been languishing,—yes, languishing for yesterday's arrival. And how yesterday has crowned my prospects, I need hardly say.

Jacob. Dear Rachel, this is something.

Leah. Hear me speak, my lord. You are my husband, and as such I have a right to claim you: but I purposely refrain from over-talking, and without adducing those endearing terms, with which last night your tenderness addressed me, thinking I was Rachel, must endeavour to demean myself in such a manner as to merit your affection, though the love, in that case, will lie wholly on my side, and you do every thing from interested motives, giving me no more than what I merit.

Rachel. Dearest Leah, can I hear this from you, and without emotion? No; we both proceeded from one father, and as such I ought to

love

love you. Be persuaded I *do* love you, and if ever your neglectful husband tendered my regard, hear me require him by that circumstance to tender your regard too. After this, if he have any corner of his heart to spare another object, let him think seven years will soon be over, when that other may be blest.

Jacob. I am determined. Take me, Leah; for last night, mistaking you, I swore I would for ever shew myself your loving husband. For that reason, therefore, were it not for Rachel's estimation, I will keep my promise. Laban, no-more words. I take your offer. Seven years more will soon be past.

Laban. The affair is settled then between us. Truly I rejoice it is so.

XXXI.

GENESIS xxix. xxx.

JABOB'S HISTORY CONTINUED.

NOTWITHSTANDING Jacob's resolution, as already mentioned, to love Leah, he considered her with great indifference, so that when the time came round for Rachel's marriage,

riage, he had got no children. Leah was, indeed, as well as Rachel, barren ; but the sacred writer says, that Jacob hated her, and therefore did the Lord think fit to open, as is said, her womb ; on which she had four children in succession, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and that Judah, from whose tribe, as will appear hereafter, the Redeemer was to come among us, and from whom the Jews received their appellation. Rachel, seeing this, was envious of her sister's happiness, and, in the words of Moses, said to Jacob, " give me children, or I die." But Jacob's wrath was kindled, and he asked her, whether he were God, who had denied her children ? Rachel, in the sequel, bade her husband, as the custom of the times allowed, go in and lie with Bilhah, so that upon any terms she might have children. Now this Bilhah was her handmaid. Bilhah bore her master quickly after that, two little ones, called Dan and Naphtali, which was a matter of rejoicing to her mistress.

Leah, not disposed to let her sister triumph, if she could prevent it, and observing that herself had left off bearing children, then bestowed her handmaid, Zilpah, upon Jacob, and she bore him Gad and Asher ; upon which the exultation of her mistress Leah was so great ; that she expressed it in the following manner :

" Happy

" Happy am I, for the daughters of our land
" will call me blessed." These circumstances
shock us now, but they were customary in those
days, and therefore no one blamed them.

Leah, after this, enveigled Jacob to come in
and lie with her. The way she took is mentioned
in the thirtieth chapter of the book of Ge-
nesis, but needs not here be introduced. The
consequence of this was three more children,
Issachar and Zebulun, two males; and Dinah,
last of all, a female.

In the sequel it appears, that God remem-
bered Rachel, and removed her barrenness, on
which she had a son called Joseph. Now this
Joseph, we shall find, was pre-ordained by God
to bring about important things, in favour of
the future Jewish people, and together, with
his ten preceding brethren, and another that in
future should be born, called Benjamin, were
founders of the tribes denominated from their
names (as, for example's sake, the tribe of
Reuben, Simeon, and so forth) into which
the nation of the Jews was afterward to be
divided. (*Joseph's birth fell out 1745 years be-
fore Christ*).

Rachel having thus borne Joseph, — Jacob
had it in his mind to quit the country with his
family, and once more see his parents, who
were

were living still: but Laban, seeing every thing had prospered with him during Jacob's service, pressed him to remain still longer. He consented, on condition, that as many sheep and goats in Laban's flocks, as might be speckled, should become his property, and that, in future, all the young which came into the world, thus speckled, in like manner should be *his*. To such a stipulation, Laban willingly consented; but the policy of Jacob afterward was this;—to make the mothers bring forth speckled little ones, by means of certain rods, the rhind or bark of which he stripped in several places, so that they might shew the white within, or to express it otherwise, be speckled rods, and which he carefully stuck up before those mothers at their time of breeding. This was Jacob's mode to thrive, and it succeeded; so that Laban came at last to envy him, and quarrels frequently ensued, which ended in the flight of Jacob and his family from Haran.

XXXII.

GENESIS XXXI.

JACOB'S FLIGHT FROM LABAN.

BEFORE CHRIST 1739.

SCENE. *An open country.*

JACOB, RACHEL, and LEAH.

JACOB.

THIS is the third day since we have been from Haran, and our flight has hitherto been prosperous. Notwithstanding which, be certain, that my uncle Laban will pursue us. Let him come, however, we have done no wrong, and God, who bade me in my sleep return to Canaan, will be with us. It was time to go, when even every menial servant in his family was always intimating, I had secretly purloined his master's substance. But what place is this?

Leah. I know the country well ; they call it Gilead.

Rachel. We are far enough from Haran, that our father should not have it in his power to hurt us further : Further I must say ; for long before we

we fled his dwelling, was there any portion for us in his house?

Jacob. Who shall condemn us then for leaving him as we have done? Ten times and upwards has he changed my wages, but the God, my fathers have sincerely worshipped, would not let him hurt my life or property. No more of that, however, now. To-morrow we resume our journey. For this night, our cattle are disposed of, safe behind the neighbouring hill.

A Herdsman (entering). Look to yourself, my lord: your uncle being told of your departure is pursuing you, and even now is come in sight.

Jacob. Unfortunate! Why how could he so soon find out the way we took?

The Herdsman. I know not. Let my lord, however, be upon his guard; for he is almost on the spot.

Jacob. Fear nothing. We are ready to receive him.

The Herdsman. He is here already.

Laban (entering). I have overtaken you, it seems. And yet, whatever grievous wrong you thought to do me, I am come without attendants to molest you.

Jacob. Wrong! what grievous wrong can I have done you?

Laban. In the first place you have carried off
my

my daughters, just like captives taken with the sword.

Jacob. What more?

Laban. I was not suffered to embrace or kiss them.

Jacob. In the next place, what?

Laban. And in the next place, you have stole my gods*.

Jacob. Not so, dear uncle: search among us, and whoever may have got your gods, let him be put to death.

Laban. My gods are certainly among you: but fear nothing; I am not come hither with the hand of violence. Restore them only, and I go away well satisfied, nor will I do you any harm; for yesternight, the God you worship warned me in a vision, faying, "see thou hurt "not Jacob;" therefore, though I came in fury, I am now a lamb. Let me but have my gods, and I return.

Jacob. Be pacified, my lord. We are not guilty of this sin with which you charge us.

Laban. Must I then return without my gods? These daughters are my daughters. Them, however, I give up, without reluctance; but my gods are dearer to me than my life; they are the safety of my house; I cannot go without them.

* Laban was a heathen, and these gods were little images, called household gods.

Jacob.

Jacob. What shall I say more? You have your people with you, and our substance is hard by, together with the camels. Let strict search be made among the furniture, and if myself, or any of my servants, have them,—once more, I repeat it, let the guilty person die. Go instantly and satisfy yourself, my lord.

Laban. I must do so; for I am sure they are among you. (*He goes out.*)

Rachel. Woe is me, for I have taken them, and they are in my camel's furniture, where he will find them!

Jacob. Is it possible, dear Rachel! could you take them?

Rachel. I feared danger in our journey, and I took them to protect us.

Jacob. To protect us! You did foolishly as well as wickedly, and what will Laban say?

Rachel. I know not; and see here he comes again.

Laban (re-entering). Who is it that can trust you? I have not been long. My people were incensed, and justly, that our gods were taken from us, and before I came had set to rummaging your camels. When, behold, they were concealed in Rachel's camel-furniture. Oh Rachel! Rachel!

Rachel. I am in the wrong, and have no answer.

Jacob.

Jacob. Rachel has done this ; but not with my consent or knowledge. We will therefore suffer—

Laban. Suffer ! I am not come here to hurt you, as already I have mentioned : *that* your God has, in a dream, forbid me. I have got my gods again, which were the objects at my heart. But yet you, Leah, that thus leave me, and you, Rachel, that thus rob me of my safeguard in this life, and what I trust to for each blessing—I am still your father, and will study all I can for your advantage—Swear then, Jacob, you will never grieve my daughters, or take any wife besides.

Jacob. I will swear this. Let God, while I am speaking, be between us.

Laban. I have finished. I have got my gods again. Farewell.—(*To Rachel*). Speak not : you would have robbed me of them. Farewell, notwithstanding. Farewell you too, son-in-law, and may your God protect you. (*He goes out*).

Jacob. He is gone, and sorely angered. This is of your doing, Rachel ; and, in future, you must pacify him, if you can, by letters. But of that hereafter. Other matters now must take up my attention. I departed from my father's, leaving Esau much enraged against me, and must now effect my reconciliation with him, if I am but able. He has fixed his habitation in the land of

of Seir. Come hither, friend (*To the Herdsman*). With all your knowledge of this country, can you tell me in what quarter of it, Seir is situated?

The Herdsman. Seir, my lord? In Edom, I imagine?

Jacob. Yes, the same.

The Herdsman. I know it well.

Jacob. About what distance is it?

The Herdsman. Let me think.—A two days' journey at the most.

Jacob. Then hear me. Take a company of herdsmen with you, and depart for Seir. When you are there, enquire my brother out, lord Esau. He is famous in the land; and when you come into his presence, tell him that his servant Jacob has sojourned with Laban, and possesses oxen, asses, flocks, and servants in abundance; for which reason, he has sent kind greetings to my lord, and will appear before him in his way towards Canaan, hoping to find grace and favour in his sight. This do, with all the speed you can.—And now, this business being settled, let us think where we shall pass the night. The hill will yield us shelter. Come; our herdsmen have, by this time, made all ready for us.

XXXIII. XXXIV.

GENESIS xxii. xxiii.

JACOB'S WRESTLING WITH AN ANGEL, AND HIS BROTHER ESAU'S KINDNESS.

BEFORE CHRIST 1739.

SCENE. *Another open country.*

JACOB, RACHEL, and CHILDREN, *on one side;*
LEAH, CHILDREN, and ATTENDANTS, *on the other.*

JACOB.

THIS is Mahanim. Here will I halt, and meet my brother.

Leah. Did the herdsman you dispatched, bring word that he was coming with four hundred people towards us?

Jacob. With no less. What can he mean but vengeance for my former conduct towards him, though so many years ago; but I have made such disposition as, I think, will save the greater part among us, if not pacify him, and blot out the recollection of those wrongs, I must acknowledge to have done him formerly. I have made up two presents,

presents, one consisting of two hundred ewes and twenty rams, together with as many goats, both *he* and *she*; the other, of three dozen camels, with their colts, ten bulls, and two score kine, as many asses, and ten foals. This double gift, allotted in two droves, have I delivered to their drivers, putting first a space between each drove, and ordered, that when Esau meets the foremost, and enquires the owner, he shall be informed they are his servant Jacob's, who intends them as a present for Lord Esau, and, together with his wives and children, is behind him; and so likewise, when he meets the hindmost; but if this should fail to pacify him, then for our more certain safety, I have made, as you may see in part, two bands of my remaining people, that if Esau should smite one, the other may escape to Canaan.

Leah. Surely he will not forget he is your brother.

Jacob. He will not, I trust; for I had flattering presages last night of this day's meeting being happy. After we had passed the ford, while I was maknig ready for repose, an angel suddenly appeared, and wrestled with me all night long. I was, I scarce know how, enabled to contend, and as he found I was not to be overcome, he touched the hollow of my thigh, and it was out of joint. I felt it was so.

Still, however, I continued wrestling, sensible that he, I had to do with, was no human adversary; and this thought invigorated my whole frame. At last, apparently quite faint, he cried, "Let me be gone, for day is breaking:" but I answered, "No; I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Upon which he laid his hand upon me, saying, "Be thou blest. Thy name shall be no longer what it has been hitherto, but ISRAEL; for as if thou wert a prince, hast thou prevailed with God." So saying, I no longer saw him; for he disappeared; and this is what consoles me with respect to Esau's coming; for beforehand I have seen, as I may say, the face of the Almighty, and yet live. How then shall any man's dismay me? But what means this tumult? Esau, I believe, is coming. Does this haste forebode ill news, or promise good? God grant the latter!

Esau (entering). Oh, my brother!

Jacob. What! would you embrace me? But not so: let me bow down before you; for such posture best befits the person who, no less than twenty years ago, departed from his father's dwelling, having done a deed that might have well entitled you to seek my life.

Esau. And do you think so meanly of your brother, as to dread his anger after twenty years have passed? or can you fancy, I have come a long

long day's journey to receive submission? No; let me embrace you.

Jacob. That your birth-right and a father's blessing—

Esau. Name not those two words: but let us mutually embrace; and may this manner of contending, and no other for the time to come, subsist between us. Oh, my dear, dear brother! (*They embrace*).

Jacob. Oh, my lord! my Esau!

Esau. Say your *Esau* only: but what little ones are these?

Jacob. These, brother, are the children God hath graciously bestowed upon me; and these likewise are my wives, our uncle Laban's daughters.

Esau. God give every one of you the choicest of his blessings; and how fares it, let me ask, with Laban? Is he well?

Leah. In health he is, my lord.

Esau. But what was your intention, brother, that you sent forth those two droves of cattle I encountered on the way?

Jacob. They were intended as a present, so that I might merit favour in your sight.

Esau. Not so, dear Jacob: I myself have to the full enough. Keep, therefore, what you have.

Jacob. Nay, nay: but, brother, I request,

G 2 that

that if I have found grace before you, my poor present may not be refused; for though I feared to meet your face, yet when I saw it, I could see that you were pleased; and it appeared to me in some sort like the face of God. Take then the blessing I designed you; since the Lord hath been at all times gracious to me, and since I myself have much more than enough. Let not my brother scorn me: this acceptance of my gift I shall consider as an instance of his love.

Esau. If it be so then, I must yield, and will requite your love hereafter. But of that, enough. How is our father? Do you know? As you have reconciled yourself to me, so likewise I design to sue for reconciliation to my father. Even when you quitted Canaan, did I quit it likewise; and my father was exceedingly incensed against me for my marriage. I will therefore go with you, and crave his pardon. When we left him, he was indisposed, you know, and like to die; but God, I need not say, restored him, and but lately he was well; though, as I said before, I will go with you to his home, and visit him myself.

Jacob. What happiness for me!

Esau. What then prevents our setting forward even now?

Jacob. Hear me, my lord: the children are
of

of tender age, and I have many of the flocks with young. Should they be over driven, they would die. Let then my lord go on before his servant, who will slowly follow, till he gets to Canaan, as the children and the cattle may permit him.

Esau. Let me leave you, then, some few of my four hundred people, to divide, with yours, the labours of the way..

Jacob. What needeth it, my lord? Once more, let me find favour in your sight. I will not slack my pace: but pass you on to Canaan to our father, and apprise him of my coming.

Esau. No, not so, dear brother: we will go together into Isaac's presence, and intreat his blessing. Hear me then.

Jacob. What would, my lord?

Esau. Know you the land of Shechem, in our way to Canaan, or more properly *in* Canaan? Shalem is a city of the Shechemites.

Jacob. Yes, brother, I know Shalem well.

Esau. At Shalem then, together with my people, I will halt till you come up, and join us. Hebron, the sojournment of our father, is no great way thence. Let us then meet at Shalem.

Jacob. I will meet you there, my lord..

Esau. Till then, God prosper you. Farewell, dear Jacob. (*He goes out*).

Jacob. Farewell, Esau. Come, dear Leah,

and dear Rachel, and dear little ones, let us proceed. This reconciliation gives my heart great pleasure.

XXXV.

GENESIS XXXIV.

THE SHALEMITES LAID WASTE
FOR DINAH.

BEFORE CHRIST 1730.

JACOB, having come to Shalem in the land of Shechem, where, as mentioned in the last, his brother was to tarry for him, sojourned there some space of time; and being now in Canaan, wished to purchase a possession. So he bought a field of Hamor, father to the prince, or ruler of the country, and erected there an altar.

It appears, though such a circumstance is not to be accounted for, that Jacob's stay in Shechem was at least seven years; for at that period, reckoning from his first arrival there, was Dinah treated like a harlot, by the son of Hamor, prince, as said already, of the country, and whose name was also Shechem. Shechem, after the commission of so great a crime, was moved to marry Dinah, and this wish afford-

ed

ed Jacob's sons the opportunity of satisfying their revenge on Shechem, for his treatment of their sister, which, to bring about, they did as follows :

They let Shechem know, that their beloved sister could not marry any man that was uncircumcised : but granting Shechem, and each male within the city, would submit to be as they were, with regard to circumcision, he should then have Dinah for a wife. Her beauty wrought on Shechem's heart to make him undergo the operation, and the hopes of having such a wealthy man as Jacob settle in their country, wrought on Shechem's subjects likewise to endure the operation. "Lo," said they, "these men are peaceable," alluding to the family of Jacob. "Let them therefore live among us, since the land is large enough for both ; and let us take their daughters for the time to come, and give them ours. Shall not their substance then, and every thing they have, become our property ?"

Inveigled by these motives, they were forthwith circumcised ; but on the third day afterward, that is to say, before the pain of such an operation was removed, and when they could not possibly defend themselves from violence, it seems that two of Jacob's sons, whose names were Simeon and Levi, came upon the city,

and slew all the males, brought out their sister, seized on all the cattle of the Shechemites, and made their children, wives, and other women captives. Thus was Dinah's injury revenged ; but such a vengeance greatly shocked her father.

Jacob, after this, was warned of God to visit Bethel, whither he had fled at first to shun his brother Esau, when Rebecca sent him forth. At Bethel, he arrived in safety ; and all this, before he went to see his father. He took up his dwelling there, and built an altar. Deborah, his mother's nurse, died there, as Rachel, travailing with Benjamin, her second and last son, did likewise.

After Deborah and Rachel's death, the Lord again appeared to Jacob, and annexed another blessing to those many he had promised him already. "Thou art Jacob." said God to him in a vision ; "but thy name no longer shall be "THAT, but Israel ; and the land I gave to "Abraham and thy father, I will give to thee." Soon after this, it seems that Israel thought in earnest of repairing to his father. To his father's house he came with Esau, and arrived just time enough to see the venerable man surrender his last breath *.

XXXVI.

* This last particular is not indeed consistent with the dates of things, as mentioned in the Bible ; but such alteration, in
the

XXXVI, XXXVII.

GENESIS XXXV.

THE DEATHS OF RACHEL AND
ISAAC.

SCENE. *A sick apartment.*

ISAAC *on a bed.*

PRAISED be God for having spared me to the day, when I shall see my children both come back, and once more bless them. Having done so, I have lived enough, and shall expire well pleased. Near fifty years now past, I was, as I imagined, sick to death. God, notwithstanding, then thought fit to lengthen out my life, and yet I was not at that time so happy as at present, being sick again, and sensible, by what I feel within me, that my life no more is to be lengthened out ; for then my children were torn from me, but are now restored. What will their feelings be, when they behold their father ; but, alas ! what are the feelings of my younger son. The death of a beloved wife sits

the author's judgment, tends to make the following articles more interesting ; and in times of such remote antiquity, a little deviation in chronology may be allowed.

G. 5

heavy

heavy at his heart ; and Esau shares in the affliction of his brother ; so that hardly must I think they will evince much satisfaction at a meeting, which my soul has longed for ever since the moment I was told of their approach, after so long a separation. I, alas then, am the only individual that this day will render happy. But, methinks, I hear them coming. Yes, indeed ; it must be they. Support me, Nature, to go through a scene so tender, and then life, farewell. I cannot die too soon. Speak, who are you I hear ?

ESAU and ISRAEL enter.

Esau. Oh father ! father !

Isaac. Oh my children ! never was my sense of hearing better than at present ; and it compensates for every pleasure sight could have bestowed. Come to me, come to your departing father. And are you, indeed, my children ? Are you Esau ? are you Jocob ?

Esau and Israel. Yes, dear father, we are so indeed.

Isaac. Unnecessary question ! Wherefore should I ask it, when my heart beats to you ? Oh my children ! After fifty years' sad separation, am I in reality still living, and still living to embrace you ? The same messenger, dear Jacob, that informed me of your coming, told me

the likewise of the name God's angel gave you ; but this last intelligence was nothing to the former. Blessed be the God of Abraham, that has thus preserved us all for such a happy minute. But, dear children, wherefore are you silent ? why do you not speak ?

Esau. We know not what to say.

Israel. Or cannot utter what we would. Our joy in seeing the dear father, of whose sight we have been long deprived ;—yes, father, the Almighty can bear witness, that our joy on this occasion is so great, we can do nothing but embrace you.

Isaac. Do so then, dear children, while I speak : but first of all, let me thank God that I have strength enough still left me to endure this flood of happiness that rushes over my whole heart. Bless God, my soul, for all things ! Oh my children ! or perhaps I ought to say, as you will tell me, oh my Jacob ! for your soul is full of sorrow ; and this present meeting does but lighten the affliction in it, while your brother's happiness has no alloy : if he has found a father, he has not beforehand lost a wife as you have, Jacob.

Israel. Yes, dear father, I have lost my Rachel. She is gone, and of the two best blessings I had fixed my heart upon,—this present meeting, and the company of that beloved woman,

—I have lost, for ever lost the last. God grant, I may this long while yet to come reflect with joy upon the first.

Isaac. Alas! alas! that wish makes me unhappy, when I think my Jacob will be more unhappy; for indeed I have not long to live. So instant will my death be, that methinks the goodness of God's Providence has only spared me to embrace you, and receive these your affectionate embraces. May God's will in every thing be done. Alas, poor Rachel, it was never granted me to hear her voice: let me then hear my Jacob speak a little of her. Yes, dear Jacob, gladly would I hear the manner of her death.

Israel. Alas! the story would but overwhelm you with still deeper sorrow, while your spirits stand, upon the other hand, in need of consolation.

Isaac. No; far otherwise: the story will console my spirits. Eight score years and upward have I lived. In such a length of time, our appetites are liable to change. Mine are no longer what they have been; and methinks before the moment of my death (for verily I think you are but come in time, that I may breathe my soul on your bosom) I shall find this story such a food as suits my present situation.

Israel. If the melancholy business must be told

told you, let my brother take that office on him: he was present at the scene.

Isaac. Do, Esau, and begin.

Esau. The narrative, though melancholy, is a short one. Rachel, in the way from Bethel hither, unexpectedly was overtaken by the pains of child-birth. (*Before Christ 1729*). She was got to bed; and scarcely was the infant born, when its unhappy mother died. The cradle of the one was, in reality, the other's grave. Her sister Leah, notwithstanding she was barren many years, yet, in the end, obtained God's blessing, and brought forth six children. Rachel, in the spirit of uneasiness so natural to women, who all wish for little ones, was envious of her sister's happiness; and often would address her husband to the following purpose: " Give me children, or I shall not live, but die with sorrow." The Almighty listened to her prayer, and she had all she wanted. She had one, to whom my brother gave the name of Joseph. He is living now and well. When he was born, the midwife bade her be of comfort, saying she should have another child. This other child she had, but at the price of her own life. It came into the world; but Rachel's spirit was departing. In her few last moments, she directed that its name should be Benoni, or the son of sorrow; " for alas," said she, " these nine months

" past

“ past have I in sorrow borne him, and he must
 “ not gladden now a mother’s heart, since I am
 “ dying.” And with that, she gave a groan,
 fell back upon the pillow, and breathed out her
 soul. The unhappy father, standing by, re-
 ceived the infant ; and forgetting Rachel for a
 moment, strained it to his bosom, saying, “ he
 “ shall not be called Benoni ; Benjamin shall
 “ be his name ; for purchased as he is at such
 “ an infinite expence to me, have I not cause to
 “ hope God’s goodness will in future teach him
 “ to become the son of my right hand.”

Israel. Break off, dear Esau, he is dead.

Esau. Dead, Jacob !

Israel. Yes ; he rendered up the ghost this
 moment, while you turned your head ; and
 sunk without a groan.

Esau. Yea, verily, as if he had but waited
 for the melancholy tale before he went ; but he
 is gone, and has not once put forth his hand to
 bless us.

Israel. Take, dear brother ; take the blessing
 I had from him, when, so many years ago, I fled
 your fury. Take your birth-right too ; for I re-
 store them both. They were the occasion of
 our quarrels. May our future peace attend on
 my renunciation of them.

Esau. Dear, dear Jacob ! you affect my heart !
 If our dear father could but witness this !

Israel.

Israel. His spirit is the witness. Come, dear Esau, and let now the last sad duties to be paid this lifeless body take up our attention. We have lost our common friend. Let us be friends then to each other.

XXXVIII.

GENESIS XXXVI.

JOSEPH SOLD TO SLAVERY.

BEFORE CHRIST 1729.

SCENE. *The fields.*

REUBEN, SIMEON, JUDAH, LEVI, and the
rest of ISRAEL's children.

LEVI.

WE may be sure he will come to us; as this morning it was meant he should set out, and I took care, where last of all we fed our flocks, to have our coming here to Dothan generally known.

Simeon. When therefore he is come, let us be steady to our purpose; and by any means get rid of such a brother.

Reuben (aside). What then would they do? Alas, I tremble for the consequences! but at present must dissemble my concern.

Levi. At seventeen years of age, because he
is

is our father's favourite, who has dressed him in a coat of many colours, to affect so much superiority, and with his dreams insult us !

Simeon. Aye, as thus : " Hear what I dreamed last night. As we were binding sheaves together in the field, behold your sheaves rose up, and made obeisance to my sheaf."

Levi. And then his dream about the sun and moon, with the eleven stars, that made the like obeisance to him.

Simeon. What can be so plain ? He means his father by the sun : the moon he puts to represent his mother, though since dead ; and the eleven stars were in the place of us, his brothers, who, if dreams speak truly, are all fated to bend down before him.

Levi. Which, if we are wise, we must prevent. And look, where he is coming.

Reuben (aside). How I dread what they may think of doing !

Joseph (entering). Brothers, is all well ? Our father sends to know how every thing goes with you :—but what signifies this whispering ? and what mean you ? I mistake, or you look angry ? What can I have done ? Dear Simeon, you are going to say something. Tell me what, that, if I have done wrong, I may intreat forgiveness.

Simeon. Joseph, this submission on your part is proper ; but it comes too late. The conduct, that

that at present makes you fear, might easily have been avoided. You have been the favourite of our father, but employed his partiality to bring your brothers into more disgrace than such a partiality would, of itself, have brought therewith.

Levi. You have had made a coat of many colours ; but not satisfied with such expression of a father's fondness, have displayed it in our fight with all the triumph of a favourite son, instead of saying to us, " Brothers, though I wear this token of a father's love, yet I will act in such a manner, that in some sort it shall fit us all."

Simeon. And you are dreaming everlasting of being our superior. It is, therefore, self-defence which makes us act the part we shall proceed to, so that—

Joseph. So that,—what, dear Simeon, and dear brothers ? Every one of you, but Reuben, seems, while speaking, to grow angrier with me. What do you design to do ?

Simeon. To rid us on the spot of such a brother.

Joseph. Rid yourselves, and on the spot ! To murder me ? You cannot certainly mean that !

Levi. We can, and do. This is not the first time our just resentments planned this riddance ; but till now have we enjoyed no opportunity of vengeance.

Simeon. But at present, distant as we are from every

every habitation, justice shall no longer be delayed; prepare then—for this moment must you die.

Joseph. Oh heaven! oh heaven! Have you the heart to tell me so! If I have done you any wrong, I meant no harm, and am the youngest here. You should bethink yourselves of that.

Levi. No words, no words. We have be-thought ourselves of that. First, brothers, let us tear away this coat of many colours, which so often he has shewn us, as the token of that love our father has withdrawn from us, to lavish it on him. Help, help, for he resists.

Joseph. No, Simeon, I will not resist; but give it up myself. There, take it, and have pity on me. God can witness, that I never meant to do you wrong; but, on the other hand, have always loved you like a brother, and even love you still, however harshly you treat me.

Simeon. Sly hypocrite!

Joseph. Dear Reuben, you seem sad. Pray for me to my brothers. On my knees, I beg forgiveness. Let me live at least. I am a favourite, you assert; but why? Let me ask that. I have a reason for it. If my father loved me as, till very lately, the last born, that cause, I need not tell you, has now ceased; and Benjamin is in my place. You ought then to kill Benjamin, but you will spare us both, I hope. I kneel, dear brothers;

brothers ; I fall flat upon the earth before you. I came hither to enquire your health. That is among the offices of love. Kill me not, therefore, for my love.

Reuben (aside). What shall I do ? Grant, heaven, the scheme, which I have thought of, prosper.—*(To the rest).* Hear me, brothers. I hate Joseph for his arrogance, as much as you can do ; yet, notwithstanding, let us shed no blood, but cast him into some deep pit ; and, fortunately, there is one hard by. There let him perish, so shall we be rid of such a dreamer, and not stain our hands with blood. What say you, brothers, to it. *(He makes signs to Joseph).*

Simeon. But supposing he get out ?

Reuben. He cannot. Leave that circumstance to me.—*(Aside to Joseph).* Rely on my affection. Tarry in the pit till night, and I will then deliver you.

Simeon. Well, since you are agreed, be it as Reuben says. Where is this pit ?

Reuben. Not half a stone's throw off. This way.

Simeon. Well, Joseph, have you any thing to urge ?

Joseph. Oh heaven, to urge ! And must I then compound for life, by being thrown into a pit. It is, however, something gained, some short

short protraction of my life, and I accept your cruel mercy.

Levi. To the pit then bear him off: but stop his mouth, lest he should make a noise, and travellers, passing by, come up to his assistance.

Joseph. Miserable day! What will become of me! Oh brothers! brothers! (*They all go out but Reuben, carrying Joseph with them.*)

Reuben. Thus far have I prospered; and I act this seemingly unnatural part, but less unnatural than my brothers, to preserve the object of their jealousy from that immediate death they were proceeding to inflict upon him. In the pit he may abide till night, and then, while they are sleeping, will I silently steal to him, and afford such means as I am able to afford, for his escape. But what will his afflicted father say; for Joseph never can, in future, think of living with his brothers. If he does, this complot must be known, and what effect will it produce on the old man? Poor Joseph! Little did you think, upon receiving this same coat of many colours (*looking at it on the ground*) as the token of a father's partiality, and when you were so glad to put it on, that at a day so speedily to come, it would be torn with indignation from you by your angry brothers! Little too, poor father, did you think, that when you made him so distingu-

guishing a garment, it would be the last you should bestow upon him. But the sight of this ill-fated garment has in some sort caused me to forget the unhappy owner. What then will the miserable Joseph do, when I have saved him from this pit? I know not. God, I hope, will turn my thoughts on some expedient for the next day's business; though, if not, I have done every thing I could to save him. But my brothers are returning. Joseph is committed to the pit. I will avoid their company. I cannot soften them. I will employ my thoughts upon my cattle till night come; and if I can, forbear to think of my unhappy brother till the time draws on, when I can safely set him free.

Re-enter SIMEON, LEVI, JUDAH, and the rest.

Simeon. It was well counselled, Judah; and these Midianitish merchants, going by, have rid us of our brother more completely than the pit could possibly have done! He might have very probably escaped: but by thus selling him, we have not only got these twenty silver pieces, but can safely say we are not guilty of his blood.

Levi. And draw no less advantage from the affair, than what his death would have procured us; for these merchants will be sure to carry him

him so far from Canaan, that he never can return thereto again.

Judah. Well, let him now consider what his dreams will come to: but where pray is Reuben? He approves not of our scheme. Where is he?

Simeon. At the fold, I fancy.

Levi. He will surely pay a visit to the pit. Run, therefore, brother Simeon; be a spy upon him, but not so that he may see you; and provided he should think of visiting the dreamer, bring us word.

Simeon. I will, I will. (*He goes out.*)

Levi. And, in the mean time, we must think what reason we shall give him that the captive is not there.

Judah. What reason? Why what reason can be better than that some wild beast hath eat him.

Levi. Aye, and dip his coat in blood, that we may show it to his father. This will be a confirmation of his death; nor shall we be suspected of the part we have been playing.

Judah. True; but here comes Simeon back. Well, Simeon?

Simeon (coming in). I stole slyly to the fold, and needed no long stay; for Reuben, when I came, was speaking to himself of Joseph, and I overheard

overheard him say, “ poor youth ! I thought of
 “ turning off my thoughts till night from your
 “ unhappy state by business, but am ill at ease,
 “ and cannot. I must visit you, and comfort
 “ your afflicted heart, with information of my
 “ purpose, more precise than what I could
 “ communicate by whispers, as I did before
 “ my brothers.” Saying this, he rose, and is
 proceeding round about, that he may reach the
 pit. He will assuredly come hither, when he
 finds his brother gone, and you must have some
 story ready, as the cause why he is absent.

Judah. That we have already thought of.

Levi. Oh leave me alone to manage the
 whole matter. I have had a thought, and you
 shall see me go to work.

Simeon. Then go to work immediately ; for
 here he comes.

Levi. Fear nothing ; I am ready.

Reuben (coming in). Where, alas ! is Joseph ?

Levi. Where ? Why in the pit. Where should
 he be, but where you counselled us to put him ?

Reuben. Where I counselled you to put him !
 I shall die with apprehension of the fate that
 must beset us ! In the pit he is not.

Levi. Is not in the pit !

Reuben. No, Levi.

Levi. No ! not in the pit ! Wait here a little :
 I will not be long. (*He goes out*).

Reuben.

Reuben. The child is gone, and whither shall I flee to hide myself?

Simeon. A good enquiry truly! for if any beast should have devoured him in the pit, and nothing is more likely, we all know by whose advice he was committed to it.

Judah. Yes, and Reuben knows that too.

Reuben. Oh brothers! brothers! Did you mean to kill him, and must I, who thought to save his life, be charged as the occasion of his death?

Levi (re-entering). He is not there for certain. Yet we left him there. Some beast—

Judah. Yes, yes; some beast upon the hunt for food must have attacked him.

Simeon. What are we to do then, Reuben?

Reuben. Do? I know not.

Levi. Hear me. It is certain we have lost him; whether he has been devoured, or whether, which is not unlikely, he has cleared the pit, and so escaped us. In the first case, he is irrecoverably lost; and in the second, no less so; for in a forest such as this is, famine will at last destroy him. Either way, bad news to tell our father: but the less calamitous is this, that he has been devoured. Let us then tell him so; for should we say we lost him in the desert, that would be a living grief to Isreal, while his death is but a momentary sorrow.

Simeon.

Simeon. Yes, let us inform him so ; and to confirm it, we need only kill a goat, and dip this coat of many colours in the blood. It will be then a certainty that some wild beast hath eaten him. Shall we do this ? What say you, *Reuben* ?

Reuben. Ask me nothing of the matter : I am overwhelmed with horror, and can give no answer to your questions.

Levi. Well, the affair then is agreed on. Let us therefore go and manage things accordingly. (*All go out but Reuben*).

Reuben. Ah me ! what will become of us ! and what will our dear father answer, when we tell him Joseph's miserable fortune ! Some wild beast hath preyed upon him in the wilderness. This, I confess, a fortune less disastrous far than that of having wandered from us in the wilderness, and being lost. One is a momentary, but the other a continued death. From pure compassion, I must side then with my brothers, and not mention what I fear has happened. Let me therefore lock up the tremendous secret in my heart—the terrible suspicion that my brothers may have murdered Joseph. I will do so, and when soon the bloody coat is shewn him, and they say, “ This we have found : judge if it appertain not to our brother,” let my father be deceived with the

idea that some beast has found and preyed upon him. Yes, there is a sort of mercy in it.

XXXIX. XL.

GENESIS xxxix. xl.

JOSEPH'S COMMITMENT TO PRISON, AND HIS EXPLANATION OF THE DREAMS OF PHARAOH'S OFFICERS.

BEFORE CHRIST 1718.

SCENE. *A prison room.*

JOSEPH, with the Chief BUTLER, and Chief CONFECTIONER of PHARAOH.

The CHIEF BUTLER.

YES, so it is: but tell us, Joseph the whole matter, as it happened; every thing at length.

Joseph. The story is a long one. I was hated by my brothers. I was often visited with dreams from God, declaratory, as I thought, of his good will and favour to me. I revealed these dreams. They could not bear that I, the younger, should affect superiority, and therefore sold me

me for a slave to certain Midianites, who happened to pass through the forest, where at that time they were pasturing their flocks. Those Midianites were coming down to Egypt; they arrived; and I was sold to Potiphar, who, as you know, is captain of king Pharaoh's guard. He put me in his house, a servant; and, as often he informed me, every thing was prosperous I had any manner of concern in, made me overseer of his family: but, as it proved, my happiness was not to be of long duration. I was so unfortunate as to seem pleasing in my mistress's idea, and she importuned me to commit a deed against her husband's peace of mind, and such as would have brought dishonour on his family: but I refused her, saying, " Lo my master hath delivered to my keeping every thing he is possessed of. There is no one greater in this house than I; nor hath he kept back any thing from me, excepting you, because you are his wife. How, therefore, can I do so great a wickedness, and sin against that God, whom, from my infancy till now, I have been taught to fear?" On this I fled, but left my garment in her hand, which she had previously laid hold of. Finding matters thus, her love was turned to hatred. She alarmed the servants. They came to her; when, she

said, as I have since been told, “ Lo, do but “ see what sort of servant this same Hebrew “ is ; he has been here, and wanted to be free “ with me : but when I would not yield to his “ entreaties, and cried out, he left his garment “ in my hand, and fled.” So saying, she bid those about her, lay it up, as witness of my guilt, and on her lord’s return (for he was then from home) acquainted him as she had done the servants ; and on that account am I a prisoner here.

The Butler. And yet some consolation is it, that the keeper treats you as he does : Excepting this restraint, which is indeed a hardship, you seem rather master here, than one like us. Undoubtedly, like Potiphar, he has discovered your integrity, and therefore trusts you as he does. We have not that advantage. Servants, though we have been to so great a king as Pharaoh.

Joseph. But pray what was your offence ?

The Confectioner. We know not. Pharaoh shewed us favour, and that raised us enemies, who sought our ruin.

The Butler. But you introduced your tale by speaking in regard to dreams. My fellow prisoner here and I have each had such a dream, as makes us wish to learn the interpretation. Certain is it, they refer to one another, but we know of none that can explain them.

Joseph.

Joseph. Does not the interpretation of all dreams belong to God? What were they?

The Butler. Oh that you could let us know the meaning! I will tell you mine, however. While I slept, methought a vine sprung up before me, having three large branches, and ripe fruit upon them. Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, wherein I pressed the grapes, and then delivered it to Pharaoh. This, I well remember, was the substance of my dream.

Joseph. And this is the interpretation of your dream; not mine, but dictated by God. The branches are three days, within which time, king Pharaoh will replace you in your office, and as lately, so in future, will you stand beside him to supply his cup. Rely upon this explanation, which will certainly prove true; but when things prosper with you, think of me then, and make known the tale of my hard lot to Pharaoh; so that I may quit this house: for every thing is true I have at present told you. Shew me therefore kindness, when the scene is changed with you.

The Butler. Oh, doubt not I should gratefully remember your interpretation, could it possibly come true: but, no; I must not hope such happiness.

The Confectioner. Well now for me. You
H 3 have

have divined great things in favour of my brother prisoner. Let me therefore know the meaning of my dream, in turn, which was as follows: I had three white baskets on my head, and in the uppermost, all manner of baked meats for Pharaoh; but the birds came down, and ate them as I walked along.

Joseph. Your dream, alas! portends un-happiness; for in three days will Pharaoh hang you on a tree, and leave the birds to prey upon your flesh.

And saying so, the conversation ended. We might here go on to represent the officer's distress at such an ominous interpretation put upon his dream: but so to do would be an absolute departure from the business of this work. It is sufficient to remark, that Joseph's explanation of these dreams was fully verified; for three days after, Pharaoh made a feast for all his servants, and restored the imprisoned butler to his place, but hanged the other; notwithstanding which, the butler, when restored, was so ungrateful in his prosperous state, as not to think of Joseph, who, for two years after, languished in confinement.

XLI.

GENESIS xli.

JOSEPH LIBERATED FROM CONFINEMENT, AND ADVANCED.

BEFORE CHRIST 1715.

SCENE. *A room of state.*PHARAOH *on his throne, the BUTLER at his side, and other OFFICERS.*

PHARAOH.

HAS it been publicly proclaimed throughout the realm, that any one who can interpret these two visions I have had, shall be advanced to honour?

Officer. It has been proclaimed, my lord.

Pharaoh. And no magician or wise man come forth?

Officer. None yet, my lord.

The Butler. A happy recollection! But before I speak, O king, let me confess my fault; for the remembrance of it comes upon me. Pharaoh, two years since, was wroth with many of his servants, and committed both the chief con-

fectioner and me to prison, where there lay a Hebrew in confinement, who continues there at present. We had each a dream, which he interpreted; and every thing came out as he foretold; for Pharaoh, of his grace and favour, pardoned me, and hanged up him.

Pharaoh. Can this be true? Then I have still some hope: Go therefore, one of you, and call this youth before us.

The Butler. In the city prison you will find him. He was servant to the captain of king Pharaoh's guard.

Pharaoh. Let him appear with speed.—A Hebrew, said you?

The Butler. Yea, my lord.

Pharaoh. Then very probably he cannot speak our tongue?

Butler. Imperfectedly, my lord. He understands it.

Pharaoh. It were better then I should have ready both these visions, written down on paper, in the Hebrew tongue. He will be able to consider them with more attention, than if uttered in a language which he does not understand so well.

The Butler. He will, my lord; and fortunately here is one, who has sojourned in Canaan, and both speaks and writes the Hebrew tongue.

tongue. Take pen and paper, and draw near the table, so shall Pharaoh dictate while you write.

Pharaoh. Good, good! Write first then, but in Hebrew, “ I was standing by the river side, and saw seven fat well favoured kine come up, and pasture; after which, seven others, meagre and ill-favoured, followed, and devoured the former.” This is the first dream. Now write again. “ I saw seven ears of corn spring up, both full and good, and seven thin ears soon after, which were blighted by the wind: and these thin ears consumed the full ones.” This was the last dream I had.—And you have written them exactly.—In good time, for here this Hebrew comes.—(*To Joseph coming in*) Make room, and put him here before us. Take, young man, that paper in your hand, and hear me. I have had the visions, you will find, both written there in Hebrew, and am sad at heart, since none of my magicians can interpret what they mean; but I have heard, you understand all dreams, and can explain them.

Joseph. Not in me, O king, is such a knowledge. God, however, shall return my lord an answer, as I hope, of peace.

Pharaoh. Read then the dreams, as you will

find them written ; and (*to the assembly*) Let every one keep silence while he meditates.

Joseph (after consideration). Praised be the God of Abraham ! of Isaac ! and of Jacob ! that on this occasion, as on many others, has enlightened me. The dreams, O king, are one. The seven fat kine, and seven full ears of corn here mentioned, are as many years of plenty that shall bless the land of Egypt ; but the seven lean kine, and seven thin ears of corn succeeding, are as many years of famine that shall follow. And whereas my lord dreamt twice, it was because the thing is fixed by God, and will most surely come to pass. Let rulers therefore be appointed over all the land, and during the seven plenteous years, let them lay up in barns a quantity of corn sufficient for the years of famine, which will prove extremely grievous, and not only here in Egypt, but through all the world.

Pharaoh. There is a frankness in your speech that stamps it with sincerity, and my uneasiness of mind is now removed : but who is proper to preside in this collection of the corn, while plenty lasts, which you have wisely recommended ; one in whom is the Almighty's spirit ? For as much as you have shewn us this event that is to happen, there is no one so discreet and wise

as

as you are. You shall be the president of Egypt, and your word a law therein. Here officer (*to the butler*) since by your means our apprehensions are thus done away, and Egypt rescued from destruction, take this ring, and put it on the young man's finger. Let a vesture of fine linen be prepared him, with a golden chain to put about his neck ; and let the trumpets sound ; for he shall be the second man in Egypt.

Joseph. Oh, my sovereign ! Is this real ? Do I sleep or wake ? and after having been unnaturally sold to servitude, and thrown into a dungeon, there to perish for no crime, am I at length so happy ?

Pharaoh. Rather is the happiness reserved for Egypt : but still more ; enquiry shall be made concerning your imprisonment, and where the guilt shall be discovered, punishment awarded.

Joseph. I desire no punishment on my accuser : let my enemies, whoever they may be, repent, and be of God forgiven. Why should I expect compassion at the hand of strangers, when my very brothers leagued against me : but I trust in God, who will not finally forsake me.

The Officer. The king is rising. Bow the knee before him as he passes. (*The assembly breaks up.*)

XLII.

FURTHER HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

JOSEPH, when promoted thus in Egypt, had attained to nearly thirty years of age. His honours grew incessantly, and Pharaoh gave him Asenath, by whom he had two children; first Manasseh, and then Ephraim. While the plenteous years prevailed, he was employed in gathering up the corn, and stowing it in granaries. At last began the famine, and while Egypt had sufficient corn to feed the people, it increased from land to land.

By these mysterious means did God prepare for the removal of his people, when the famine should prevail among them, out of Canaan into Egypt, whither Israel sent at first his children to buy bread. In Joseph, he was pleased (as Stephen tells the Council in the Acts of the Apostles) to dispatch a man beforehand, by whose means the Jews should gain a settlement where he had prophesied to Abraham they should come (*see Article xv.*) and where, although they were at first to be received with kindness, they should in the end be grievously oppressed.

XLIII.

XLIII.

GENESIS xliii.

JOSEPH'S FIRST INTERVIEW WITH
HIS BROTHERS.

BEFORE CHRIST 1707.

SCENE. *A room in JOSEPH's house.*JOSEPH (*speaking to a servant at the entrance*):

LET them now come in, and the interpreter I sent for, with them.—(*After the servant is withdrawn*). Who could have believed it, that those brothers, who no less than thirteen years ago so unaffectionately sold me, should be put into my power! In this I see the finger of God's Providence; and taught by my example, let no child of grief despair; but place his trust in God, who will at last be sure to comfort him in sorrow. They are come to purchase food, the famine being rise in Canaan. I shall now hear tidings of my father, and see once again those brothers, who are still my brothers, notwithstanding they behaved with so much cruelty to me. But how am I constrained to act a double part! to speak by means of an interpreter,

preter, lest, finding me acquainted with their tongue, they should suspect me; and to treat them harshly, when my love would rather prompt me to hold out my arm on their approach, and hold them to my heart! But what I wish is to encrease the pleasure I shall give them, and my father too, when the whole mystery is known. They come, and the interpreter, whom I have made acquainted with my pious plot, precedes them. Thus far every thing is well.

*Enter ISRAEL'S children, all but BENJAMIN,
with the Interpreter before them.*

Joseph (to the interpreter). Come hither, and demand, in Hebrew, of these people, whence they come.

(The interpreter propounds the question, and through all this scene, as well as those that follow it, till Joseph is discovered to his brothers, he must be supposed to do the same, at every question and reply.)

Reuben. From Canaan to buy food, my lord.

Joseph. From Canaan! Ye are spies; and to discern the nakedness of Egypt are ye come.

Reuben. Not so, my lord. Your servants are, in truth, come down to purchase food. We are all of us one man's sons. We are no spies; but, with submission be it said, true men.

Joseph. Nay, nay; but to discern the nakedness of Egypt ye are come.

Reuben

Reuben. Once more, I say, my lord, we are all innocent of such a crime. We are indeed true men. There were twelve of us formerly, but as for one—

Joseph. Well, as for one?

Reuben. He is, alas! no more.

Joseph. What dead?

Reuben. These thirteen years ago: but to increase the misery to our father, who still mourns whenever he reflects upon his loss, he died not in the common way. He was bewildered in a forest, and some beast must have destroyed him there: for in our search to find this brother, we discovered nothing appertaining to him, but his bloody coat. This we took home, and shewing it our father; he cried out, “It is indeed my dear son’s coat, and he is torn to pieces. I will therefore clothe myself with sackcloth, and mourn for him till the day of my own death.”

Joseph. Poor man! (*aside*). Thus comes the truth at last to light.—But for the other son?

Reuben. Him we have left behind us, lest misfortune should befall him on the journey, being youngest of us all.

Joseph (*aside*). That is the little Benjamin, whom my departed mother bore at the expence of her own life. The dear, dear Benjamin, that I have kissed so frequently! but I must not betray

betray myself.—Tell them, interpreter, that though I think they must be spies, they shall not be without the opportunity of proving they are all true men. Let one of them go fetch his youngest brother, while the rest are kept in prison here. If they submit to such a proof, then every thing is well, and they have been accused unjustly: but if not, by Pharaoh they are spies: let them know this, while I withdraw a little, but not meaning to stay long. (*He goes out.*)

Simeon. What will become of us? What means he, but to make us slaves, and likewise Benjamin, when he is once brought down.

Reuben. And what but such a punishment does that unfeeling conduct merit, which a brother in the wilderness, so many years ago, experienced. Heaven, as well as you do, knows which of us is most criminal in that foul deed.

Simeon. Forbear, forbear. You have no guilt like ours to answer for, in Joseph's miserable lot: but I, alas, approved myself most active, though each of us is most guilty, since we would not hear him, when he earnestly besought us: therefore is this unexpected misery now to be our punishment.

Joseph (re-entering). I have had a little time for thought. Do this then, and no more shall be required; for I fear God.

Reuben.

Reuben. Oh, Sir, what is it?

Joseph. If ye are spies, let one of you remain behind in prison, and the other nine depart with corn: but bring your youngest brother, when you come to buy more corn, so shall your words be verified, and you shall live. Interpreter, what say they?

The Interpreter. They consent it should be so.

Joseph. Then (*taking hold of Simeon*) let this be the hostage. Bind him, and dismiss the rest. (*Going out, but returning*). And hark, interpreter (*after having whispered*). Yes,—each man's money in his sack.—You understand.

Interpreter. It shall be done, my lord.

Joseph (*aside, while going out, and the interpreter is binding Simeon*). They bind him! Can I stay, and witness such a scene? He was most guilty at the pit; but, after all, is he not still my brother? Let me not look at him then. Oh, Simeon! God can witness for me, that at present I am cruel, for no other purpose, than hereafter to appear the kinder. (*He goes out*).

Reuben. Miserable day! Oh, brother Simeon!

Simeon. Weep not for me, Reuben. I am the most guilty. It is therefore fitting, that I only

only should be singled out from all my brothers, to confront the danger that may threaten us.

Interpreter. Come, you have heard my lord's commands.

Reuben. And must we leave you here in Egypt?

Simeon. Yes; and to prevent all further altercation, lead me to my prison.

Reuben. Let us, at least, go with you thither, and take leave no earlier of each other, than needs must.

Simeon. Come with me then.

XLIV.

GENESIS xlii. xliii.

THE RETURN OF ISRAEL'S SONS.

BEFORE CHRIST 1707.

THE officer of Joseph having furnished Israel's sons with corn, and done besides, as he was ordered, they set out on their return to Canaan, leaving Simeon, as already has been said, behind them. On the journey homeward, having reached their inn, they were preparing to take out their corn, and feed the beasts they rode, when one among them, to his great astonishment,

nishment observed the money in his sack, which he imagined he had left behind him for the corn. His heart, at such a prospect, failed within him ; and the rest were likewise no less frightened ; for on search, the other eight discovered that their money was returned them also. Troubled at this circumstance, they travelled forward, and at last arrived in Canaan.

Being come before their father, they related every thing ; at which the old man's spirit sunk within him. " Me," said he, " have ye been reaved of my children. Joseph is no more, " and I have now lost Simeon ; yet, as if this loss were not enough, ye would deprive me next of Benjamin." To pacify the aged Israel, Reuben bade him slay his sons, if he omitted to bring Simeon back, and likewise Benjamin, whenever they went down again to purchase corn in Egypt. " Slay" said he, " my sons, if I should fail to do so : give me Benjamin, and I will bring both him and Simeon back :" But, " no," replied his father, " Benjamin shall not go with you ; for his brother Joseph is no more, and he alone is left of Rachel's children ; therefore should misfortune happen to him in the journey, then will ye bring down with sorrow my grey hairs to death."

In this determination he remained, till, in a little

little time, the famine still continuing to rage sore in Canaan, all the corn first brought from Egypt was exhausted: when, compelled to such a measure as is now to be related, Israel bade his sons once more set out for Egypt, and obtain a fresh supply of food.

Judah. The man did solemnly protest he should believe us spies, and not true men, unless our brother Benjamin came with us: and besides, if Benjamin be left behind then, Simeon must remain in bonds.

Israel. Good heaven! Why dealt you so unkindly by me as to say you had a brother left behind?

Reuben. The man enquired minutely of our kindred. Could we know for certain he would say, "Bring down your brother?"

Judah. Let him go with me, dear father, and that moment we set out; or certainly our families will die for want of food. I will be surety for him. If I do not bring him back, as well as Simeon, let me bear the blame for ever.

Israel. If it must be so, it must; but yet take with you every one a present in your vessels, honey, spices, balm, myrrh, nuts, and almonds; and have double money; for, perchance, that you brought back the first was owing to an oversight. Take too your brother; and may God be merciful to me, when you appear before the

man.

man, that he may send me back your brothers. If he does not send them back, and I must be bereaved of my two children thus, I am bereaved.—God's will be done. Farewell!

Judah. Things now are as they should be. Come. Farewell, dear father!

XLV.**GENESIS xliii.****JOSEPH'S SECOND INTERVIEW
WITH HIS BROTHERS.****BEFORE CHRIST 1707.**

SCENE. *The Apartment, as before, in JOSEPH's
House.*

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS (*entering with Benjamin*).

BENJAMIN.

IS this the governor's? the man you spoke
of?

Judah. Yes, dear Benjamin.—But wherefore, brothers, are we brought in here again on our arrival? When we first came down, there might be some necessity, the governor not knowing who

we

166 JOSEPH'S SECOND INTERVIEW, &c.

we were. But now, what can this second interview forebode?

Reuben. Perhaps, he brings us in to give account about the money we returned with in our sacks, and he will that way seek occasion to make bondmen of us: but I see the interpreter. He is of gentle nature, and may possibly, upon entreaty, be our friend. Let me speak to him.—(*To the interpreter coming in.*) Oh, sir, we came indeed, at first, to purchase corn; but going home, it chanced that on our opening every man his sack, we found our money, in full weight, returned us; but have brought it back, and other money likewise, for more corn. We cannot tell who put the money, where we found it, in our sacks.

Interpreter. Fear nothing.—Peace be to you; for your God has willed it should be so. We had your money. Once again fear nothing. And, behold, see where your brother comes to welcome you.

Simeon here comes in.

Reuben. Oh Simeon, we are come again; and Benjamin, you see, is with us; that if God do but dispose the governor in our behalf, we may return in safety with you both to Canaan;

naan; but we know not what to think, and must give way to fear.

Simeon. No, Reuben, there is nothing you need fear; for every thing, upon the other hand, proves favourable, and the governor is well affected towards us. He has ordered, that whenever you returned, you should dine with him, and will soon himself be with you, to confirm what now I mention.

Reuben. We should dine with him!

Interpreter. Break off, and range yourselves. My lord approaches.

JOSEPH here comes in, but still speaks through the Interpreter.

Reuben (bowing with his brothers). Long life and happiness attend my lord. Our father—

Joseph. Let me ask you, in the first place, whether he is well?

Reuben He is, my lord; and—(producing the present).

Joseph. And is this your youngest brother? He you spoke of?

Reuben. He is so, my lord.

Joseph (aside). How greatly he seems changed! But many years have passed. My bowels yearn upon him! They must not, however, see me weep.—

weep.—(*To Benjamin*). Come hither, my good youth. They call you?—

Benjamin (bowing). Benjamin, my lord.

Joseph. May God be gracious to you.—(*To the interpreter aside*). I withdraw. My tears will else betray me: Bid them in when I have quitted the apartment; and do you return. I will myself come back. (*He goes out*).

Benjamin. What ails, my lord?

Reuben. Our presence troubles him.

Interpreter. Not so; for he is often thus. He orders me to bring you in, that you may eat bread with him. This way therefore; follow me.

Reuben. What mystery is this? What will it end in? (*They go out*).

JOSEPH re-entering behind them.

I have composed myself a little, and can think what still is to be done. I suffer, and they suffer likewise: but our sufferings will soon end, with this advantage on their side, that in proportion as at present their distress increases, just in such proportion will their pleasure be increased, when those distresses are all over.—(*To the interpreter coming back*). You return exactly as I wished. Observe then what I have to tell you. Put the thing I spoke of where I said; and on the morrow, after

after they have left the house, up and pursue them.

Interpreter. I remember every thing, my lord, and shall not fail to do as you have ordered me.

Joseph. Then that is every thing. Lead on.

XLVI.

GENESIS xliv.

JOSEPH'S POLICY TO KEEP HIS BROTHERS.

BEFORE CHRIST 1707.

SCENE. *An open place, with houses at a distance.*

REUBEN and his brothers, all but JOSEPH.

REUBEN.

WE have not been as yet two hours upon our journey ; but this spot is so enchanting, that what think you of our resting here awhile ? Our cattle will not stray ; or if they should, we can observe them, while we sit and talk together.

Judah. Your proposal is a good one. Let us then enjoy ourselves a little, which we may, more comfortably now, than hitherto we could.

VOL. I.

I

have

have done upon our way from Canaan, Simeon being with us, and our youngest brother Benjamin not left behind.

Benjamin. What strange customs those Egyptians have among them ! Did you notice, brothers, in what order we were seated at the governor's ? You, Reuben, first ; and each according to his birth-right ; so that I, of course, sat last.

Levi. And at how many tables we were placed ? The governor at one, the Egyptians at another, and we likewise at a third.

Simeon. Yes, so it always is in Egypt, where the people of the country never eat with Hebrews ; for they look on that as an abomination.

Reuben. But my lord is not a Hebrew : why then did not the Egyptians sit with him.

Simeon. Oh that was certainly for state.

Benjamin. Ah, Simeon, you have noticed many of their customs, while you stayed among them.

Simeon. Doubtless have I.

Benjamin. And pray is it customary to give some among their guests five times as much as others ? Why was that ? and why had I so great a portion sent me ?

Simeon. Oh, in doing so, they pay their guests an honour ; so that you may think yourself a favourite.

Benjamin.

Benjamin. To confess the truth, I liked that governor.

The Interpreter (entering with attendants). Ho! Hebrews! Have we overtaken you? What crime is this imputed to you?

Reuben. Crime, sir?

Interpreter. Yes: you are accused of having shamefully concealed, and carried off from table, my lord's silver cup.

Judah. We, sir, do so?

Interpreter. Yes, you: his cup, in which he drinks, and frequently divines. You have repaid his good with evil, and are very guilty.

Reuben. Why, Sir, use you these harsh words? God keep us from so great a sin. Behold, we brought you back the money we discovered in our sacks. How therefore should we rob my lord?

Interpreter. But you *have* robbed him.

Judah. As a proof that we have not committed this great crime, search every where about us.

Interpreter. No: the cup is some where in the furniture your cattle carry. *That*, my lord has been assured of.

Judah. Freely, therefore, search our cattle: they are feeding here hard by, where we have just now left them under shelter; and let him who shall appear to have secreted it, be put to

I 2 death.

death. Nor that alone; for we will every one of us consent to be my lord's bond-servants.

Interpreter. You deserve, indeed, a harsher treatment: but let him, on whom or in whose furniture the cup is found, be servant to my lord, and all the rest go free.

Reuben. Content. Come then, and we will help you to make search.

Interpreter. Soft! not so many of you. Let but five or six go with us, lest, in searching, some one should secrete the cup, while our attention is employed elsewhere.

Reuben. Well, be it as you say. We six will go. (*They all go out but five.*)

Gad, We rob my lord!

Asher. That treated us so kindly!

Napthali. And behaved more like a brother, as we thought, than stranger!

Benjamin. I, for my part, would have rather died, than done so bad an action.

The Interpreter (re-entering with the rest). See what sort of people you must be, or rather, (*looking at Benjamin*) this ungrateful youth; for in his sack the cup is found.

Benjamin. In mine! impossible!

Interpreter. Yes; swear you did not take it. Those who steal, will hardly find it difficult to lie a little. Ask your brother here, (*pointing to Reuben,*)

Reuben) who saw it lying in your sack (the very first I came to) if you stole it.

Reuben. What have I to say? I am confounded. Let us all go back.

Interpreter. Yes, that you must, and instantly.

Benjamin. Oh heaven! Oh heaven; found lying in my sack! Take note, however, brothers, I am innocent.

Interpreter. Yes, innocent indeed! Come then, and tell my lord so.

XLVII. XLVIII.

GENESIS xliv. xlv.

JUDAH'S HUMBLE SUIT, AND THE DISCOVERY OF JOSEPH.

BEFORE CHRIST 1707.

SCENE. *The former apartment in JOSEPH's
house.*

JOSEPH and the INTERPRETER.

JOSEPH.

YOU know the whole affair between my brothers and myself, As you have hitherto been secret, be so still, but that not long; since

very possibly an hour or less will end this business of deception, which I practise on them to promote a brotherly intention. They are in the anti-chamber, as you say. Let them be instantly brought in; and enter you too with them: but observe me carefully, and when I wave my hand, let us be left alone. (*After the interpreter is gone out*). Now shall I be their judge; though not a frowning one to doom them, but beforehand fixed to mitigate the crime they have committed.

Here the INTERPRETER, with attendants, and JOSEPH's brothers, enter.

Joseph. I could but little think of seeing you so soon again, and for the reason that has brought you back. What wickedness have you been guilty of? Had you no thought that such a man, as I am, could divine?

Judah. Alas! what shall we say on this occasion to my lord? or how find means to clear ourselves! God hath found out the iniquity committed by your servants. We are willing to become your bondsmen, we, and he too, in whose sack the cup has been discovered. In God's sight, our brother is without offence; but as it seems—I know not what to say—we are your servants.

Joseph. God forbid I should permit it to be so: but he that stole the cup shall be my servant. Let him

him only suffer for the theft ; and with regard to you, go back in peace and safety to your father.

Judah. I intended to keep silence, but the anguish of my heart will not permit it. Hear me then, my lord, and while I speak, let not your anger burn against me ; for your power in Egypt is like Pharaoh's. When we first came hither, we informed my lord we had a father, an old man, in Canaan, with a child of his old age, whom we had left behind us. Whereupon, you said unto your servants, “ if I do not see your youngest brother when you come again, “ you shall not view my face, but be accounted spies.” And when we were returned to Canaan, we repeated to our father every thing my lord had said. Some little time elapsed, when once again we wanted food ; on which, our father bade us take a second journey hither. I replied ; “ we cannot possibly go down, unless we take our youngest brother likewise ; “ for we may not see the governor without him :” but our father answered, “ Joseph is no more, and I have now lost Simeon ; yet, as if this loss were not enough, you would deprive me next of Benjamin ; however, he shall not go with you ; for of Rachel's children he alone is left me ; and if mischief happen to him on the journey, then will you

" bring down with sorrow my grey hairs to
" death."—I speak, but trouble you, my lord.

Joseph. Proceed, for I am listening.

Judah. Therefore when I see my father, and the lad, whose life is his support, does not come with me, he will die; and I, your servant, shall bring down his reverend head to death with sorrow; for, alas! I was his surety, saying " If " I do not bring back Benjamin, as well as " Simeon, let me bear the blame for ever." I beseech you, therefore, let me be a bondman in his stead, and send him with his brothers back to Canaan; for, alas! how shall I see my father's face, if this unhappy youth should not be with me? I shall never dare lift up my eyes, when I behold the evil God will, in the sequel, certainly bring down on his old age!

Joseph (waving his hand to the people in the chamber, who go out). Go, quit the chamber every one of you; but hark ye (to the interpreter, who shortly after follows).

Reuben (to his brothers, and while Joseph is thus whispering). Now may we discern the justice which in this wise overtakes us in an act of duty and obedience to our father, who has sent us to buy corn; and you are guilty, seeing, as you did, the anguish of a brother, but refusing him your pity. I may now unload my mind with

with freedom, since the person, who alone could understand, has left the chamber ; otherwise I would not thus accuse you.

☞ *Joseph (aside).* Reuben speaks, not thinking me acquainted with his language. I may therefore gather something, if I listen.

Reuben. All your sorrow ought to be the treatment Joseph thirteen years ago experienced from you ; since, for my part, I thank God, I can at this affecting moment wash my hands of any crime against him. Seeing you resolved on murder, I advised his being cast into the pit, designing to deliver him at night.

Joseph (aside). And so he did. I recollect it now. Alas ! poor Reuben ! it appears then you are guiltless of the sin I have so long imputed to you, with the rest of my unnatural brothers.

Reuben. Yes, designing, I assert it in God's presence, to deliver him at night ; but his escape prevented me, if he did really escape ; concerning which, I have at all times doubted. I considered it a dutious office in me not to start my doubts to our afflicted father, and on that account, agreed in your report, that he had been devoured ; for had I contradicted that report, and glanced at murder, which I feared had been committed, what would then have followed ? or, supposing I had represented him as lost, our

father would, in such a case, have kept continually ruminating on the miseries Joseph could not but endure, while wandering in a forest, far from all society with human beings ; therefore did I join in your account of his unhappy death, in such a manner as his bloody garment seemed to speak.

Joseph (aside). And thus has my dear father been deceived.

Simeon. Yes, Reuben, you say well ; seemed only, and no more ; yet, after all, we did not kill him ; but as certain Midianitish traffickers went by, while we were passing towards the pit, we sold him for the wretched sum of thirty silver pieces. This is the whole truth. I give it as the only poor amends for such unnatural conduct to a brother.

Benjamin. Miserable Joseph !

Reuben. This then was our brother's wretched fortune. Made a slave of, as he is, in some far distant country, why should we complain of suffering the same fate ? Unhappy Joseph ! now are you avenged !

Joseph (coming forward). Be pacified, dear Reuben, Joseph is not that unhappy youth you think him : for myself,—yes, brothers, I am Joseph ! You are suddenly struck motionless. It is however true, that I am Joseph. Come then near me : I am Joseph, I repeat ; *that Joseph*

Joseph whom you sold to be a slave. Oh, Benjamin, dear brother, I have spoke till now by interpreter. Such feint was needful hitherto ; but now that I resume my mother-tongue, let me speak first to *you*, and not speak only, but thus fold you to my heart. Dear Benjamin ! Dear offspring of a mother whom you never saw ! She clasped you to her breast, while life and breath were both departing, and affectionately gazed, when she was never to behold you more. I fall upon your neck ; I kiss and clasp you to my breast ; and after thirteen years' sad separation, am not to be separated from you any more. Dear Benjamin ! Dear brother ! and dear friend ! speak to me.

Benjamin. Speak you, brother, for us both ? My happiness transports me so beyond myself, that I would speak, but cannot.

Joseph. Pardon me, dear Benjamin, the crime of theft imputed to you : brotherly affection was the cause thereof, that I might bring you back. Embrace me therefore once again ; and come you likewise, Reuben, to me. Witness, heaven, how truly I rejoice to find that torn as I have been so long from Canaan and a father, you would have befriended me. Embrace me, brother ; and let me embrace you likewise.

Reuben. Oh, my Joseph ! have I lived to be so happy ?

Joseph. And do you, dear brothers, also let me hold you to my heart. Though if the recollection of past scenes will not permit your drawing near, forget at least what has been done, as I do, nor be grieved in future that you sold me; for in that, God's Providence but sent me to this place before you, that a father with his family, and not they only, but whole kingdoms, might be saved from famine. So that you may see it was not you, but God, that willed I should be banished from my native land. Yes, God; and of his grace and mercy he has rather sent me hither, than to any other place, that I might be a sort of parent to king Pharaoh, and a ruler over Egypt. Haste then, and ascend to Canaan, that our father may be told of all my glory, and come down together with his children and their children also; otherwise they will unfortunately, after all, want bread; for still there must be five years' dearth. Whereas, if they remove their dwellings hither, I will nourish them with the affection of a son and kinsman. But I speak, while you dare only now and then look at me. For the present, therefore, let us close the scene; and on the morrow, you will be less agitated. I will then speak to you, and give ear, while you on your part speak to me. Come therefore: you need opportunity for meditation, and I likewise.

Once

Once more, be not troubled. I blot out all past transactions from my mind ; blot you too all remembrance of them out of yours. This way. I will bestow you for the present, where at leisure you may think on this day's wondrous business, and compose the tumult of your bosoms.

XLIX. L. LI.

GENESIS xlv. xlvi.

JACOB MADE ACQUAINTED OF HIS SON ; HIS SETTING OUT FOR EGYPT, AND ESTABLISHMENT AT GOSHEN.

BEFORE CHRIST 1706.

JOSEPH, when he sent away his brothers, gave them waggons to transport their father, with his family, from Canaan into Egypt, and enjoined them, saying, " See ye fall not out " with one another by the way." Arriving at their father's, they informed him what had come to pass, and made confession of their former sin respecting Joseph. This last circumstance, indeed, we are not told in scripture ; but the idea

idea that in such a situation they should do so, coincides with probability. He would not be at first persuaded, touching what was told him with regard to Joseph; but when once he saw the waggons, he took comfort, saying in the words of Holy Writ, "It is enough; my son, "I am convinced, is living: let me go and "see him then before I die."

In Egypt he arrived, together with his chit- and their children, three score and ten souls in all; and Joseph made his chariot ready to go forth and meet his father. At the interview, he fell upon the old man's neck, and kissed him; while this last attested heaven, and said, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, "and you are yet alive." These mutual salutattons being over, Joseph mentioned he would go and speak to Pharaoh, telling him his father's house were come, and that the men by occupation tended on their flocks, that they might gain a settlement in Goshen; every shepherd being an abomination to the people of the land, who would not suffer such to mingle in their towns or habitations; and this circumstance afforded Joseph a pretext for pitching on the land of Goshen for his father, which we find, from Scripture, was reputed the best part of Egypt.

Pharaoh, being thus informed by Joseph, treated Israel and his family with kindness, giving

giving order for their introduction to his presence. Israel, being come accordingly before him, Pharaoh asked his age. "The years," said Israel, "of my pilgrimage are now six score and ten. Not only few, but evil hi-
therto have been my years, which do not equal yet the life of my progenitors;" and saying so, he blessed king Pharaoh.

After this, the famine raged still more and more in Egypt, which reduced the inhabitants to part with every thing they had for food: as first, their money; secondly, their flocks, their asses, and their houses: thirdly, all their land: and, lastly, what is called their bodies, that is, liberty. The priests were not required, however, thus to part with every thing they were possessed of.

LII.

GENESIS xlviij. xlix.

THE DEATH OF ISRAEL.

BEFORE CHRIST 1689.

ISRAEL lived in Goshen for the term of seventeen years, and then fell sick. Perceiving the conclusion of his life was nigh at hand, he sent for Joseph, who came to him with his children

children Ephraim and Manasseh. " If," said he to Joseph, " I have ever yet found grace
" and favour in your sight ; put here your hand
" beneath my thigh, and swear you will not
" bury me in Egypt, but among my brethren :
" for at Luz, in Canaan, God appeared, and
" blest me, saying, " *I will make thee fruitful,*
" *and bestow this land upon thy seed for ever.*"
" And not only *that*, but likewise in my jour-
" ney hither, namely, long before I reached the
" borders of the land, he stood again by night
" before me, promising he would evince him-
" self my guide and guardian down to Egypt,
" and in future bring me safely back. Alas !
" I did not then imagine he meant only that
" my bones should be brought back ; so fond
" is every one of life ; although I might have
" judged as much, from what he added ; name-
" ly, that my Joseph should put forth his hand
" upon my eyes, no doubt to close them after
" I was dead. Obey then the good purposes
" of God, not only as you would be faithful
" to that God, but also dutious to your father.
" And behold your children Ephraim and Ma-
" nasseh, which were born to you before I
" came to dwell in Egypt, I consider mine, as
" Reuben and his brother Simeon, the two first
" I ever had, are mine : but those you are here-
" after to beget, shall all be yours, and take
" that

" that name in their inheritance your other
" children have."

Now Israel's eyes were dim, as Moses tells us, and he could not well distinguish objects; so that seeing Ephraim and Manasseh standing by him, he asked Joseph who they were?

Joseph. They are the children you were speaking of just now, dear father: those with which God's Providence has blest me here.

Israel. Alas, my sight is almost gone: but place them here, close by my bed, and I will bless them; for I never thought I should have seen your face again, and God hath shewn me not that only, but the face of children too proceeding from you.

Joseph. This is Ephraim, father (*placing him on Israel's left*), and this Manasseh (*on his right; Manasseh being Joseph's first-born child*).

Israel (*crossing his hands to lay them on the children's heads*). May the God of Abraham and my father Isaac, that hath fed me all my life till now, and sent his angel to preserve me safe from every evil, bless you both, dear children, and increase you to a multitude upon the earth.

Joseph. Oh, father, lay not your right hand on Ephraim, but Manasseh here, who is my first-born.—Let me take it off.

Israel. No, no, dear son. I know what I am doing, and will have my right hand here, although

although Manasseh shall become a mighty nation : but, in truth, his younger brother shall exceed him, and encrease till he is made the father of a multitude of nations. Once more, therefore, be ye blessed, dear children ; and in future time, when any of our tribes would draw a blessing down from heaven upon him, let him say, “ God make me such as Ephraim and Manasseh were.” And as for you, dear Joseph, lo, I die ; but the Almighty shall be with you, and in future time transport your children’s children back to Canaan, where their families shall settle, having rooted out the inhabitants thereof at God’s commandment, as a punishment for their idolatry : but I am faint. Call quickly, call my other children, that before I yield my spirit, I may bless them likewise. They are waiting in the anti-chamber. Run, dear Ephraim and Manasseh. (*Ephraim and Manasseh both go out*). Joseph, my dear Joseph, in addition to that blessing I reserve for your inheritance, I have bestowed a portion greater than what any of your brothers will receive, and which my sword and bow obtained me from the Amorites.

Re-enter EPHRAIM and MANASSEH, with the sons of ISRAEL.

Israel. Dear children, you are come to witness the last words I have to utter. Stand before me,

me, therefore, and reply not, while I prophesy of things that shall befall you. Reuben, you my first-born, are the excellence of dignity and power, and yet unstable as the stream, you never shall excel among your brothers. Simeon, and my next born, Levi, you have instruments of cruelty in your abodes, and shall be therefore scattered in the land of Israel. Judah, you shall have your brethren's praise ; nor shall the sceptre leave your tribe, till Shiloh come. Hear this, and be assured that future ages shall reveal what Shiloh means. You, Zebulun, shall be a haven of the sea for ships, and shall extend your reign to Zidon. Issachar, you too shall prove yourself a patient ass between two burthens. Dan shall judge his people in the gate. A troop shall conquer Gad, but Gad himself shall conquer in the end. The fatness of the earth and royal delicacies shall subsist my Asher. Naphtali is like a hind let loose. You, Joseph, are a fruitful bough beside some well, whose branches overtop the wall. The archers have kept shooting at you ; but your bow was strong. With blessings from above, and blessings from the deep ; with blessings of the breast and womb shall the Almighty fill you ; and though others have been blessed already, yet your blessings shall surpass in measure all the former ; for
your

your father has been heard before his two great predecessors, and his glory spread itself beyond the everlasting hills: it shall remain upon your head; yea, Joseph, on your head shall it remain, divided as so cruelly you have been from your brothers. And you lastly, Benjamin, shall triumph in much spoil.—Enough, and now I have no further use for life.

Joseph. Dear father, you sink down exhausted.

Israel. Yes, for I am dying. Bury me, I charge you, in the field of Ephron, in Macpelah. There they buried Abraham with Sarah. There they buried Isaac with Rebecca, and there too I buried Leah.—Comfort my sick heart!—Oh God of Abraham and of Isaac, hear my prayer!—Oh, children!

Joseph. He is dying.—He is dead.—Oh, brothers, we have now no father. Let us every one withdraw, and spend the remnant of the day in prayer, that God would be a father to us.

LIII.

GENESIS I.

THE CONSCIOUS DREAD OF ISRAEL'S CHILDREN.

BEFORE CHRIST 1689.

SCENE. *A Room in JOSEPH's House.*

ISRAEL's Children, all but JOSEPH.

REUBEN.

THUS has our brother Joseph's piety fulfilled all duty. Israel has been buried in the land of Canaan, and at length are we returned again to Egypt. We have lost our father. Let us therefore live together in such friendship, that hereafter we may feel our loss as little as is possible.

Judah. Good council! but, alas, shall any one of us, for certain, have it in his power to reap the fruits of friendship now, that we have lost our father?

Reuben. What, dear Judah, do you mean?

Levi. What may be guessed at very easily; for is it not a dreadful likelihood that Joseph, being now restrained no longer by the presence

of

of a father, will in future hate us, and repay upon our heads those evil things which we must own we did him.

Reuben. Have you then received so little proof of his affection as to entertain such doubts?

Levi. Oh you and Benjamin indeed, that have not done him wrong, may talk as if you trusted to the strength of his affection; but what confidence can we repose upon his goodness, we that must, as long as we have life, remember our iniquity against so kind a brother?

Reuben. Shall I pledge my life by way of surety for your safety? Yes, dear brother, I will pledge it; and particularly if, conceiving you are brought into fresh danger from his just resentment, now that you have lost a father, you renew your supplications and repentance.

Judah. That, dear Reuben, did we mean to do, and therefore was it that myself and Levi wished to have this meeting with you, the first opportunity we have enjoyed for thought since our return to Egypt, after the interment of our father.

Levi. And in this, dear Reuben, what a brotherly assistance may you not afford us?

Reuben. Can you stand in need of any service in my power, and I not give it?

Benjamin. Let me speak, although the youngest;

gest ; for both Reuben and myself will visit Joseph, and assure him that our father, some few hours before his death, enjoined us in his name, to beg he would forgive the trespass of his brothers, and their sin. This, though a falsity, is yet a pious one ; and of our own accord too will we add *our* prayers for your forgiveness.

Levi. This might stand us in great stead. Go therefore both, and in our father's name announce this humble supplication.

Reuben. What, shall we go now ?

Judah. Yes, now ; we are unhappy ; and to doubt, occasions us no less anxiety, than to be certain would.

Reuben. Well, I will go at your request, though I am sure before-hand of his answer. It will be as I have said.

Levi. God grant it may. (*Reuben and Benjamin go out.*)

Judah. Oh, brother, who that puts the least degree of value upon peace of mind, will gratify, at the expence of such a jewel, his mean jealousies. We feared our brother would obtain the ascendancy among us ; and to save ourselves from that humiliating situation, would have killed him. Reuben interfered in his behalf, and we were wrought upon to sell him for a slave. We thought, that being carried to a distant country, he would never be our lord ; and yet, have we avoided

avoided such a fortune? But I see him coming. Let us every one fall down upon our knees before him, as his dreams importred we should do. Thrice happy, had it rather been the sign of our humility, than token of our guilt!

Enter JOSEPH, followed by REUBEN and BENJAMIN.

Joseph. What mean you, brothers, by that posture. Rise, and do not injure me by thinking I bear any one among you that ill will your message intimates. Upon the other hand, hope every thing; for I am in the place of God. You meant, indeed, to do me evil, but his wonder-working hand converted your designs to good, that I might be the saviour of much people from the pains of famine.

Levi. For my brothers let me speak. You call us back to life; and this day's generosity is but the repetition of preceding kindness.

Joseph. Cease, dear Levi, nor consider I am generous, doing nothing but my duty, and the office of a brother: but completely to remove your fears, know this, that I myself am now to be your suitor.

Levi. Ours?—What suit can such a brother have to make us?

Joseph. Israel, our dear father, rests in peace; and

and we have buried him in Canaan. He is dead: we are all mortal. Swear then, that provided you outlive me, you will carry up my bones from hence, and lay them in the field of Ephron, in the tomb where Abraham, Isaac, and our father Israel are all buried. Will you promise me this last sad office?

Levi. Will we promise? Will we live? But rather, let not one of us survive to do you such an office. May you live yourself, revered for age, and crowned with happiness and honour long, long after we are in our graves.

Joseph. Vain wish! Let me accept it notwithstanding as an instance of your brotherly affection. We have all the greatest need thereof from one another, now that this fresh loss still overwhelms us with such heart-felt sorrow. Time, however, and reflection, that remove all evils, will, I trust, remove ours likewise. Come, dear brothers, and once more rely on my protection.

LIV. LV.

EXODUS i.

THE GREAT INCREASE OF ISRAEL IN
THE LAND, AND PHARAOH'S
CRUEL POLICY TO CHECK IT.

FROM Joseph's* dying, to the birth of Moses, there occurs a space of many years: before this birth, we are informed in scripture, that a king succeeded to the throne of Egypt, who was hostile to the Jews, " who knew not " Joseph," as the sacred penman tells us, and who seeing their increase, was fearful they might cause a revolution in the land; and therefore gave commandment, (*before Christ 1577*) that the midwives, when a male was born, should kill it; but this mandate being generally disregarded, it was ordered, four years afterward, that they should throw it instantly into the river, but

* The book of Genefis closes with the death of Joseph, and contains the history of 2369 years; next to which, in the order of time, follows the book of Job, written, as is generally thought, by Moses.

Joseph's death was at the distance of fifty-four years from his father's, he being then 110 years of age: sixteen years after this, died Levi, who was grandfather to Moses and Aaron. And forty-two years after, began the bondage of the children of Israel, to which the present Article refers.

preserve

preserve the females. This commandment, like the first, however, it appears was not in every case obeyed; on which, the midwives being taxed by Pharoah, with their disobedience, answered, that “ the Hebrews were not like the “ Egyptian women, when in labour; but ro- “ bust and lively; so that they were commonly “ delivered long before the midwives could be “ with them.”

Three years after this, that is to say, 1571 before Christ Jesus, while this dreadful order was depending, and no doubt in many instances enforced, a woman, married to a husband of the house of Levi (Levi's son, as we have said already), brought him forth a son, and hid him in her house three months; but, as she feared the child would be discovered if she kept him any longer, she determined to expose him, in the manner shortly after to be mentioned. Now this child, as many know already, was that Moses, set apart by God, with Aaron (born three years before him), for the accomplishment of many wonderous purposes, as we are told in scripture.

LVI.

EXODUS ii.

THE PRESERVATION OF MOSES.

BEFORE CHRIST 1571.

SCENE. *A shady place.*

A YOUNG WOMAN, with an Infant in her arms.

The Young Woman.

I HAVE been alarmed, it seems then, without cause; and yet so wonderful is the effect of fear, am got into the very place I should have shunned; since here king Pharaoh's daughter comes, and near about this time, attended by her women, to undress, that she may bathe in the adjoining river. Should those women see me, with my little brother, they would question me concerning my design, and afterwards betray me to the officers, who carry on this cruel business of destroying all our poor male infants. Let me, without fear, go back then to the spot, where I have left the cradle, which my mother has so well secured with pitch, that it must needs for many hours together keep out water. Yes, I say,

I say, let me go thither, and, obeying her directions, put my little brother in it, and commit him to the water, where the flags grow thickest. Pharoah's daughter cannot chuse but see him when she steps into the river ; and my miserable mother has a hope she will take pity on him : therefore has she sent me hither to expose the infant. But, alas ! is it a certainty she will compassionate his helpless state ? Is it a certainty she will descry him, when exposed ? God grant she may discover and befriend him : but supposing she should not, his situation in the river hardly can be more deplorable than in his mother's chamber, since inevitably he must die, if she endeavours to conceal him any longer in her dwelling. Come, poor babe, you have no friend but God that you can trust to for your preservation. May his providence keep watch, and send the princes to redeem you from that watery bed to which I must consign you ; and where, otherwise, you are inevitably doomed to perish.

Having said these words, the tender hearted maid proceeded to make disposition of the infant in its cradle, which was done pursuant to the scheme concerted by her mother ; after which, in further prosecution of it, she returned to lurk about the spot she had, as just now mentioned, left, till Pharoah's daughter should appear. The favourable issue of her plan depended upon two

events ; for, first of all, the child, uneasy in its situation, might be crying when the princess came to bathe, in which case she would hear it, while the hand-maids were undressing her ; or, secondly, she could not but discern its cradle on the flags, while stepping down into the water, if before, its cries should not discover it. The first event, however, came to pass ; for when the princess had descended from the palace, and was putting off her cloaths, she heard, what she supposed, an infant crying, and enquired of her attendants where the child could be ?—Not drowning surely, said the princess ?

One of the Attendants. Certainly, not that.

The Princess. The crying still continues, and is not far off. Run two or three of you that way, and look. (*Two or three of the Attendants go out.*)

Another Attendant. Yonder, I see a woman walking. Who can tell but she may be the infant's mother ?

The Princess. Haste, and bring her hither. (*After that other Attendant is gone out.*) Doubtless it must be a Hebrew child, just thrown into the water ; but this place is rather distant from the scene, where they perform these daily murders.

Re-enter the last mentioned Attendant, with the

YOUNG WOMAN.

The Young Woman (aside). God be thanked,
our

our scheme is not unlikely to succeed! The princess has already noticed me.

The Princess. Come hither, my good woman. Can you be the mother?—(*Looking at her*) but not so; you are too young.

Re-enter the first mentioned Attendants with an Infant.

First Attendant. Oh, madam, see what we have found. (*Shewing the infant*).

Second Attendant. Just where your highness bathes, disposed of in a cradle, and afloat among the flags.

The Princess. Poor babe! A Hebrew infant, whom the mother has committed to a chance of death, that so it may escape a sure one. (*To the young woman*). You must be a Hebrew woman. Do you know this infant?

The Young Woman. Let me see:—perhaps,—but, no; I never saw it.

The Princess. Doubtless, the unhappy mother has exposed her infant here, that I might find it. I have found it, and will be the friend she wants. Could we but find a nurse!

The Young Woman. Heaven's blessing on your heart, that thus take pity of our people! Let me aid your highness's kind purpose. Let me fetch a nurse: I am acquainted very well with one among the Hebrew women.

The Princess. Do, and lose no time. (*The Young Woman goes out*).

First Attendant. But does your highness know what danger? —

The Princess. Tell me not of danger in this case: my father's orders are so cruel, that it seems a kind of duty in me, if I counteract them, and I will do so. See, Iris! the poor babe has left off crying, and now smiles.

First Attendant. I see it: but, dear mistress, think once more what you design to do. This woman may have placed herself on purpose here, and should —

The Princess. Yes, yes, I think as you do, that the woman may be interested in the preservation of this infant; but the joy of doing good, and more particularly so when infant innocence demands protection, is so great to any human bosom, that I would not seem as if I saw into her plot. It is a pious one at least; so all I look for at your hands is secrecy. Here comes our messenger: she has performed her errand speedily.

Re-enter the YOUNG WOMAN, followed by her mother.

The Young Woman. Here is a woman who will nurse the infant for your highness. I have told

told her the whole matter, and she undertakes it.

The Mother. Yes, if safely—

The Princess. Fear you nothing. Take it, and to keep you from all danger, here too is my ring. Come every morning to the palace, and inform me of the infant's health. The ring will get you introduction. Let the babe want nothing. Let its name be Moses. Go.

The Mother. (*Going out with the infant, and its sister*). I shall observe your highness' orders. (*Apart*). Might I speak, I should want words to bless God's goodness and her generosity. I have recovered my poor child, and gained it a protector.

The Princess. (*After they are gone out*). Come, for we have lost much time in this affair. The evening grows apace. Let us withdraw into the center of the arbour.

LVII.

EXODUS iii.

GOD'S APPOINTMENT OF MOSES
TO DELIVER ISRAEL.

BEFORE CHRIST 1491.

SCENE. *The country round about a mountain.*

MOSES and the little GERSHOM.

GERSHOM.

AND, Zipporah, you say is well, dear father?

Moses. Quite: and not the only, but your new-born brother.—(*Aside*). Great Creator, what a happy man am I, that in the evening of my days enjoy such calm, and all through Jethro's bounty, when the morning of my days portended nothing but a storm.

Gershom. Why speak in this wise to yourself? What were you saying, father?

Moses. I was saying, my dear little Gershom, how much happiness your grandfather has in his goodness caused me.

Gershom. Ah, dear father, I have often heard him say you were not always happy; and when-
ever

ever I asked any thing concerning you, he would inform me of strange things, which, I must say, I did not understand: but I am o'der now, and beg you will yourself tell over the whole story. It will help at least to pass away the time, while you are tending here upon the cattle at their pasture.

Moses. If you wish to hear it, and can understand me?

Gershom. I do wish to hear you; and my looks, if nothing else, while you are speaking, will be proof enough that I am not so void of understanding, as perhaps you think me.

Moses. Nay, then I consent, and will, this moment, let you know how many sad events have happened to your father. Of the oppres-
five treatment shewn my countrymen in Egypt, I am sure you know already. I remember like-
wise having told you I was saved by something like a miracle from being drowned, when that cruel order was abroad for slaying every male that should be born among our people; and that forty years elapsed, in all which time I was subsisted by the bounty of the princess, who delivered me from death. This you have heard; but nothing of the whole that is to follow.

Gershom. Nothing! Truly I am glad of that.

Moses. The princess gave me learning, and

K 6 would.

would gladly have adopted me for her own son ; but I preferred affliction with God's people, who about that time were first of all oppressed, to such an honour. Being forty years of age, I happened to be out one day among my brethren, and reflecting on the burthens laid upon them, when I saw an insolent Egyptian smite a Hebrew. I could no how check my indignation, but looked round to see if any one was near me, and not finding I was watched, attacked the Egyptian, slew him, and, assisted by the Hebrew, buried his dead body in the sand. The next day also I went out, when lo, as if the matter had been all contrived on purpose, I observed two Hebrews then disputing fiercely with each other. I ran in between them, and asked him that seemed the stronger, why he smote his fellow ? When he answered me, by saying, " Who made you our prince and judge ? " Do you design to kill me, as already you have killed the Egyptian ? " Hearing this, I was afraid ; and Pharaoh being told the matter, sought me ; upon which I fled from Egypt, and concealed myself in Midian.

Gershom. Here you mean ?

Moses. Yes, here. I was fatigued with travel, so I sat me down beside our well. Your grandfather had then seven daughters, Zipporah, your mother, being one ; and as I sat to rest myself, they

they came with pitchers to draw water for their father's flock and family. But certain shepherds that came thither likewise, with their cattle, would have kept them off ; however, I stood up, and helped them, so that they had quickly done their business : after which they went away and left me : but their father, as I learned soon after, wondering they returned so soon, enquired the reason, and was told a stranger had assisted them, by keeping off the shepherds, and then drawing water for them. Upon this, their father asked them where I was, and wherefore they had left me ? " Let the man," said he, " come in, that he may eat and drink." This invitation I accepted ; and your grandfather so much approved of my appearance at first sight, that he proposed I should become his servant. I was glad to do so ; and soon after, seeing I was faithful, he bestowed your mother on me as a wife ; since when, I have resided always with him, and, you know, had many children. This is the whole story of your father's life, dear Gershom ; and no doubt but you remember something of it.

Gershom. No, dear father ; but suppose I did, I could not hear the tale too often.

Moses. If your father were the teller of it, your affection means to say : but go, dear child ; for I imagine you are hungry by this time. Go home,

home, that every thing may be got ready for our meal, and I will follow. (*Gerishom goes out*). My Zipporah will soon be re-established in her health, and this fresh pledge of her affection will, I trust, grow up to manhood, and be better fortuned than his father.—But what flame is that before me, yonder? The whole forest seems on fire! It was not so just now! What can it mean! Protect me, gracious heaven! Dare I approach? The blaze increases, and yet wonderful to look at! What it feeds on is not in the least consumed. Let me draw nigh, if I have courage so to do, and see this wonder.

A Voice unseen. Moses! Moses!

Moses. Does my ear deceive me? It must do so; or I heard the name of "Moses" twice repeated. Hark! If I mistake not, it came this way to me.

The Voice. Moses! Moses!

Moses. Yes; again I hear it; and again distinctly twice repeated. Surely it must be a voice from heaven! The awful sight before me is no natural appearance! Let me think it from above. Speak, therefore, Lord; for I am here to answer.

The Voice. Come not nearer, Moses, but put off thy shoes, for holy is the ground on which thou standest. Stay; and with the speed of light will I be with thee.

Moses.

Moses. God of Abraham, what can this signify ! I see his angel coming !

Enter RAPHAEL.

Raphael. Moses, the commands of heaven require no preface. Hither am I come, sent to thee by the God of thy forefathers. He has seen the affliction of his people in the land of Egypt, and has heard their cry. From Egypt, therefore, will he bring them out, into a land that flows with milk and honey, and which now the Canaanites, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites inhabit. And to bring about this rescue of his people from their tyrant, he makes choice of thee. Yes, Moses, thou shalt go to Pharaoh, and demand permission for his people to leave Egypt.

Moses. Am I waking, or is every thing a dream ? Shall I demand this matter at the hand of Pharaoh ? Who am I, that I should bring the Hebrews out of Egypt ?

Raphael. Of thyself, indeed, thou wouldest be utterly unable to accomplish this great thing ; but God will certainly be with thee ; and in proof thereof, know this, that after thou hast brought them out of Egypt, they shall worship on this very mountain.

Moses.

Moses. But supposing I should go to Pharaoh, and beforehand tell the Israelites I am dispatched for their deliverance by the God their fathers worshipped, what shall I inform them is his name? for surely they will ask me.

Raphael. Thou shalt say I AM hath sent thee. That is the Almighty's name to every nation. Go then, and when once thou art arrived in Egypt, bid the elders of the Hebrew people meet together; and inform them, that the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, hath appeared to thee, that he hath seen the miseries they suffer, and will bring them out of Egypt, where they serve, into a land of plenty. They shall hear thy voice, and then go with thee to king Pharaoh, in whose presence thou shalt speak as follows: Thou shalt say, "the God we worship has met with us. Let us therefore go into the wilderness, we pray thee, three days journey, so that we may offer sacrifice." But Pharaoh will not let you go, till God has stretched out his almighty arm, and very grievously dismayed his subjects; after which he will indeed dismiss you.

Moses. Oh, my Lord! let not the Almighty be displeased, if I presume to speak still further: for king Pharaoh certainly will not obey my voice, when I inform him that the Lord hath sent me.

Raphael.

Raphael. Moses, I am ordered to remove thy doubts before thou settest about this enterprize.—Put therefore thy right hand into thy bosom.—And now take it out.

Moses. Oh, heaven! I cannot: it seems withered; and not only that, but my whole arm is dead. I cannot move the joint.

Raphael. Well now thou canst.—Attempt, however.

Moses. Truly can I now: for 'tis again just like the other.

Raphael. This is the Almighty's doing, and the wonder is intended to remove thy fears; for when thou comest in to Pharaoh, he shall work much greater wonders by thy hand. As, for example; thou shalt throw thy rod down in his sight, and it shall instantly become a serpent: but on stretching forth thy hand to take it by the tail, it shall again become a rod.

Moses. This will, no doubt, astonish Pharaoh: yet I am not eloquent, but slow of speech. How therefore shall I speak on such a great occasion?

Raphael. Who hath made man's mouth? and who, the dumb or deaf, the seeing or the blind?—Hath not the Lord?

Moses. Oh let him pardon me, if still I venture to hold out against his will, by praying he would send some other on this business.

Raphael.

Raphael. Moses, let not the Almighty's wrath be kindled to consume thee. Is not Aaron, who was born before the cruel ordinance took place, by which the Hebrew little males in Egypt were commanded to be thrown into the river—Is not Aaron, I repeat, thy elder brother? He can speak; but God proceeds by methods utterly incompetent, according to man's estimation; and accordingly, when he becomes thy partner and associate in this work (for so has his almighty will decreed, and he will meet thee in the wilderness, before thou enterest Egypt) thou art to put words into his mouth, and God will be not only with thy mouth, but his, and tell thee every thing thou art to do and say.

Moses. I yield to God's high will, if no one but myself is to perform this work.

Raphael. Go, then; nor need I, upon parting, say so much as God be with thee. Be at all times sure of his assistance. Aaron is by this apprized of every thing, as well as thou. Farewell! (*They separate*).

LVIII.

EXODUS V.

THE SLAVERY OF THE ISRAELITES
INCREASED.

BEFORE CHRIST 1491.

SCENE. *Certain brick-fields.*

Several ISRAELITES.

FIRST ISRAELITE.

WHAT think you, brethren? How will they succeed?

Second Israelite. That we shall know, e'er long; for look where they are coming.

Enter other ISRAELITES.

Third Israelite. Miserable as we are, if such be called deliverance! Would to God this Moses, and his brother Aaron, never had appeared among us.

First Israelite. He has failed then, brother?

Third Israelite. Failed! much worse, alas, than that. Our servitude is to be doubled, and in consequence of these deliverers, with their interference. I will tell you the whole matter.

Moses,

Moses, and his brother, as the thing was settled by our Elders, both went in to Pharaoh, saying, thus says God, the God of Israel: “ *Let my people go, that they may hold a feast before me in the wilderness.*” But Pharaoh asked them who the God of Israel was, that he should pay obedience to his will? “ *I know him not,*” said Pharaoh, “ *neither will I let you go.*” And they replied, “ Our God hath spoken to us. Let us go into the wilderness, we pray thee, three days journey, and do sacrifice, lest he should send some pestilence among our tribes, or fall upon them with the sword.”

First Israelite. And what said Pharaoh to this prayer?

Third Israelite. That we were idle, and should have our burthens rendered heavier than before. Then sending for our task-masters, he bade them, for the time to come, no longer give us straw, but let us get it where we could ourselves. “ And yet,” said he, “ the tale of bricks they were accustomed to deliver in at night, shall no way be diminished.” And so saying, he drove out our two deliverers, with no more comfort than the following words: “ Go, get ye to your burthens.” Upon this, they left the palace, and will soon be here to tell us the success of their unhappy business.

First

First Israelite. They are come already.

Enter MOSES and AARON.

First Israelite. You are then returned, and worse than unsuccessful! God behold, and judge you, that have made us every one to be abhorred in Pharaoh's sight, and put a sword into his servants' hands to slay us!

Moses. Hear me, every one of you, dear friends; and though, on this first application we have failed, yet doubt not of God's power to bring about what he decrees. We have indeed gone in to Pharaoh, but instead of good, he purposed to visit you with greater hardships. Still, however, trust in the Almighty, for no earlier than this very morning did he come upon my slumbers, and commune with me, as follows: "Pharaoh will not pay attention to the message, which thyself and Aaron will deliver him this morning: notwithstanding which, deliver it, and afterwards shalt thou behold, how I will deal with him. To Abraham I appeared, to Isaac, and to Jacob, by the name of God; but by my name JEHOVAH, neither of them knew me. Wherefore say unto the children sprung from Jacob, I will certainly deliver them from every burthen, and redeem their nation
" with

“ with a stretched-out arm ; and they shall be
 “ my people, when I give them all the land of
 “ Canaan, *that* of their preceding pilgrimage,
 “ wherein they have been strangers.”—But you
 hear me not : the anguish of your spirits, and
 the aggravated bondage you are threatened with,
 will not permit you. Wait then till to-morrow
 comes, and if the river be not turned to blood,
 that Pharaoh may discern we act not by our-
 selves, proclaim us two deceivers. Wait, once
 more I tell you, till to-morrow ; for a day is
 surely no great matter ; and if then this miracle
 should come to pass, you will be certain God
 is for you.—Go, dear brethren.

LIX.

EXODUS vii.

THE FIRST PLAGUE INFILCTED
UPON EGYPT.

BEFORE CHRIST 1491.

MOSES, in pursuance of his intimation,
 mentioned in the article preceding, went
 with Aaron on the morrow, into Pharaoh's
 presence, and again demanded that the Israelites
 should have permission to leave Egypt ; bidding
 Aaron,

Aaron, as a proof that God had sent him, cast his rod upon the ground. He did so, and forthwith it turned into a serpent. Pharaoh, upon this, commanded his magicians to appear, and do the like. They set about it, and by some contrivance turned their rods into as many serpents, thereby intimating, that the act of Aaron was no proof that God had sent him, since by means of their enchantments, they could do the same. However, Aaron's serpent swallowed up their serpents. Pharaoh yielding to the counsel his magicians gave him, hardened, as the Scripture says, his heart, and would not let the people go ; on which refusal, Moses ordered Aaron to stretch forth his rod that moment on the river ; which he did, and all the water in the land was turned to blood. This prodigy, however, did not work on Pharaoh's mind, and he persisted in refusing still to let the Israelites depart.

LX.

EXODUS viii. ix. x.

EIGHT OTHER PLAGUES.

BEFORE CHRIST 1491.

THE obduracy of king Pharaoh was next punished by a plague of frogs, that covered the whole kingdom: but in Goshen, where the Hebrews dwelt, there were no frogs; nor was that part of Egypt visited by any of the plagues that Pharaoh felt. This touched his heart a little, and he earnestly entreated the removal of this pestilence, protesting he would then permit the Israelites' departure out of Egypt. Moses asked him, when he wished that God should stay the plague? because, if it should cease exactly at the time he mentioned, such an incident would shew, that the Almighty was concerned in what he did; on which, he named the morrow, and accordingly the frogs all disappeared: but notwithstanding Pharaoh's promise, it appears, that afterward he hardened, as before, his heart, when he beheld the plague was done away, and still detained the Israelites.

The plague of frogs was followed by another

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no less grievous. All the dust in Egypt turned to lice, which notwithstanding had no manner of effect on Pharaoh. To the lice succeeded swarms of flies: and now the king once more entreated mercy; promising, that if this plague was stayed, he would permit the Hebrews to depart. The plague was stayed; but still the king revoked his promise, so that God decreed another visitation, which was now a murrain, and the cattle died in great abundance. Pharaoh still remaining obstinate, himself, his people, and the remnant of his flocks and herds were then infested with a plague of boils and blains. This likewise not producing any alteration in the heart of Pharaoh, Moses lifted up his rod, and there came down a grievous hail, that utterly destroyed the herbage, and broke every tree.

And now it was, that Pharaoh's heart seemed somewhat softened: he sent forth in haste for Moses and his brother, saying, "I have sinned: " the Lord is just, and I, together with my people, on the other hand, are wicked. Beg of God then, that no other plagues may be inflicted on the land, and I will let you go." Here Moses answering, said, "As soon as I am got beyond the city-walls, I will stretch forth my hands in prayer, and there shall be no

“ longer any hail; that thou mayst know who governs on the earth: but as for thee, I know thou wilt not yet fear God.” And so it happened; for no sooner had the hail ceased falling, than the king again became obdurate.

After this, a plague of locusts being threatened, Pharaoh, somewhat moved by the entreaty of his servants, would have let the Israelites depart, but not their wives, their children, or possessions: this condition being unacceptable, the plague took place. And now again the king entreated respite; but no sooner had the locusts disappeared, than his accustomed obstinacy once again prevailed, and God decreed a three days’ darkness, such a darkness, says the sacred writer, as was felt. On this, the king sent once again for Moses, and would now have let the men, together with their wives and children, go, though not their flocks. But Moses, with a sort of vehemence, replied, “ We will not leave a single hoof behind.” On which, the king commanded Moses to withdraw, and never see his face again, or he should die; to which, the prophet answered, “ Thou hast spoken well: I will *not* see thy face again.”

HOLY

HOLY WRIT FAMILIARIZED;

JUVENILE CONCEPTIONS.

THE FOURTH AGE OF THE WORLD.

ARTICLES LXI. LXII. LXIII.

EXODUS xii.

GOD'S MESSAGE, THE LAST PLAGUE ON EGYPT, AND THE HEBREWS DRIVEN OUT.

BEFORE CHRIST 1491.

God, in his omniscience, knowing that but one more plague was wanting to procure the Hebrews their deliverance, ordered Moses to go forth, and bid the people borrow of their neighbours, the Egyptians, jewels, gold and silver; that when Pharaoh drove them out, as

very shortly he would do, they might not quit his country empty handed.

This instruction they complied with, and found favour in the sight of the Egyptians; for whatever might have been the obstinacy of their king, they stood in fear of Moses, who while they were lending every thing they had, went in to Pharaoh, menacing the death of every first-born in the land, from him that sat upon the throne, to those that worked behind the mill, and every first-born too among the cattle. Pharaoh heard this menace, but it made no manner of impression on him, so that God prepared for the infliction of it.

Moses, by his order, bade the Israelitish families get ready each a lamb, or if the family should be but small, then two such families were to procure the lamb, and kill it, just before the time when God designed to visit the Egyptians with the final plague. The blood thereof they were to take and strike it on the two side posts, and upper door posts of their houses, that when God should send forth his destroying angel through the land to smite the first-born, he might see the blood, and pass that dwelling over. This is called the passover, which, with its circumstances, is inserted in the third and following verses of the twelfth of Exodus.

All

All these directions were complied with, and at midnight were the first-born smote of God, throughout the land. Their cry was very great, and Pharaoh, being now completely humbled, sent for Moses and his brother Aaron, bidding them be gone with every thing they had, and lest they should delay the time of their departure, he dispatched his servants to compel them forth.

The Israelites, however, did not stand in need of any thing like force, but quitted Egypt, to the number of six hundred thousand, with their little ones and cattle. At the time of their expulsion, they were busily employed in making bread by God's commandment, and because they had not time to bake it, they wrapped up the dough, and put it on their shoulders. This, together with the cattle just now mentioned, and the bones of Joseph, which his brothers swore should not be left in Egypt, constituted their chief baggage.

The departure of the Israelites took place four hundred years and upwards, after Abraham's departure out of Charran, and not less than fifteen hundred years before the birth of Christ. The night of their deliverance is recorded with solemnity among the Jewish people to this very day; and to perpetuate it, they observe that festival, which we call Easter-day.

LXIV.

EXODUS xiii.

GOD'S CARE OF HIS PEOPLE IN
THEIR JOURNEY.

BEFORE CHRIST 1491.

THE Almighty, having thus brought out his people, would not lead them by the nearest way to Canaan, lest the wars they would be forced to wage with the inhabitants of places in their passage, should dishearten them. On this account, he brought them through the neighbouring wilderness, till they had gained the red-sea coast, by which they were commanded to encamp.

The means God used to guide them through a wilderness, of which they had no knowledge, was an indication of his power; for in the day a cloud preceded them, and in the night a fire, both which the historian calls *a pillar*. And this pillar of a cloud and fire went always with them, till they needed no direction for their way.

LXV.

LXV.

EXODUS xiv.

PHARAOH AND HIS ARMY OVER-
THROWN.

BEFORE CHRIST 1491.

THE king of Egypt, who was rather irritated than instructed by the plagues inflicted on his land, had scarcely let the Israelites depart, but he repented of the deed, and hardened, as the historian says, his heart, so as to issue orders for the preparation of his chariot and an army. With this army he pursued, and overtook them at the place already mentioned, namely, on the red-sea coasts, to which the Israelites were come in safety, after having pitched their tents at Rameses, at Succoth, Etham, Pihahiroth, and Migdol, as is mentioned in the thirty-third of Numbers.

At such a prospect, with the sea before them, and no way behind by which they might escape, the Hebrews fainted ; and not recollecting God's preceding miracles and mercies, murmured at their leader, saying, " Hast thou brought us " here into the wilderness to die, because there

“ were no graves in Egypt? Happier we had
“ surely been in serving Pharaoh, than thus
“ dying, as we shall do, by his armies, in
“ this place.” But Moses answered them,
“ Fear nothing: stand ye still, and see the
“ Lord’s salvation, which he means this day to
“ shew you; for the Egyptians that at present
“ ye behold, shall very speedily be seen no
“ longer. Cause indeed there would be to
“ lament, if God were not, as you will find
“ him, your protector; and if now, while I
“ am speaking, his almighty Spirit did not dic-
“ tate to my heart, the means of your deliver-
“ ance from so perilous a state; in proof of
“ which, look up.” They did so, and beheld
the cloud, that had till then gone constantly
before their camp, remove and go behind it,
taking place between their tents and those of
the Egyptians, so that in the day-time it con-
cealed the Hebrews, and supplied them with a
lamp to guide their way by night.

And now their leader put himself in act to
execute the Almighty’s purpose. Standing on
the shore, he stretched his hand out, and
all night the sea went back, by reason of a
strong east wind, that acted on it; so that in the
morning there was seen a passage through it.
To this passage, Moses bade the Israelites be-
take themselves for safety. They obeyed, and
the

the Egyptians did not hesitate to follow them, though at a distance ; but, behold, when Moses and his people were got over, and the Egyptians not above half way, the sea returned, and drowned their whole host. Thus acted the Almighty to preserve his people, and the people saw it and believed.

LXVI.

EXODUS xv.

A SONG OF PRAISE BY MOSES AND
THE ISRAELITES.

TO God the Lord our voices will we raise,
And of his glorious might record the praise.
The horse, with its proud rider, in the wave
Sunk by his arm, have found a watery grave.
Safe in his love, whose strength has made us
strong ;
He is our hope, salvation, shield, and song.
Of armies he is Lord, and great in fight ;
We will proclaim the wonders of his might.
The chariots of proud Pharaoh and his host
Deep hath he sunk, or dash'd them on the coast.
His chieftains, a fierce phalanx now no more,
Float with the waves, or roll along the shore.

L 5

Let

Let Israel with glad voice, O God, combine
 Thro' the wide world to praise thy power divine.
 Glorious thine arm, whose might has thus laid
 low

All in a moment's space, the insulting foe.
 In thy great excellence, while Egypt's host
 Of their own strength, forgetting thine, made
 boast,

Didst thou arise, and send forth all thine ire,
 Fierce as a furnace fill'd with ten-fold fire.

“ We will pursue,” said they, “ will overtake,
 “ Will of their substance our sure plunder make.
 “ I will stretch forth,” said Pharoah, “ my
 “ right hand,

“ And reposess once more the flying band.”

Who are they, though as gods on earth ador'd,
 That can in grandeur vie with thee, O Lord.
 Great as thou art in glory, and whose praise,
 Men, when they sing, with trembling tongues
 should raise.

Safe in thy power, since led as by the hand,
 Thy people a select thrice favour'd band
 Didst thou lead forth: and when their nume-
 rous host,

Proud Palestine, shall once draw near thy coast,
 Terror shall fill each heart, where monst'rous
 crimes

Their residence have fix'd from earliest times;
 Such

Such as should men, of God regardless grown,
 Prostrate fall down to metal, wood, or stone.
 Nor shall this terror in their hearts subside,
 When we have cross'd in safety Jordan's tide,
 And in their land, yea there, enjoy at last,
 Peace and repose from all our labours past.
 Oh sing we then to God, and 'let each tongue
 Praise and exalt his name, our hosts among.
 Though generations pass in turn away,
 Spring for a day, like flowers, and then decay,
 Thou, in the heaven of heavens, O Lord, shalt
 reign
 High over all enthron'd in thy domain :
 No limits thy wide sovereignty shall bound,
 And of thy glorious rule no end be found.

LXVII. LXVIII.

EXODUS xvii.

THE MURMUR OF THE ISRAELITES,
 AND THEIR DISCOMFITURE OF
 THE AMALEKITES.

BEFORE CHRIST 1491.

ATTER some few days consumed in march-
 ing, Moses brought the Hebrews to a
 place, called Rephidim, not very distant from

L 6

Mount

Mount Horeb, where, as prophesied by Raphael, God would cause the Israelites, upon their journey through the wilderness, to worship him. Accordingly, the elders of the people, having Moses at their head, went on from Rephidim to Horeb, and the occasion of their visiting that place, appears to be as follows:

In their journey from the sea, the ungrateful Israelites were full of murmurings, as before, against their leader, quite forgetting the deliverance they had happily experienced by his hand: for being come to Sin, they had no food, and said to Moses, "Would we had but stayed in Egypt, where at least we never wanted thus for bread: but you have brought us forth, that we may die of hunger." Moses, being taught of God, made answer: "What am I that you accuse me thus? but God is witness to your murmurs, and this very evening will begin to rain down food, both flesh and bread, from heaven, that he may prove you, and discover whether you will yield obedience to his law or not."

As Moses had foretold, so every thing fell out; for at the evening tide, there came down quails; and early in the following morning, manna. They were ordered to collect as much as they could eat, but nothing further. Of the quails, however, they were moved by greediness to take beyond

beyond their wants ; but what they saved, bred worms, and was offensive to the smell.

The manna was not liable, however, to this inconvenience ; and besides, in Exodus, when Moses speaks of this miraculous supply bestowed upon the Israelites, we do not find they gathered more thereof than they could eat. It was their custom every morning to collect it ; but, the sabbath being holy, they forebore that day, and on the day preceding, gathered twice the usual quantity. Now, during forty years, they eat this manna ; for that length of time elapsed before they reached the borders of the land of Canaan.

After this, when they were come to Rephidim, they wanted water ; upon which their murmurs recommenced, and they imputed, as before to Moses, the design of having brought them forth into the wilderness, that they might die. However, God withdrew not his compassion from them, but commanded Moses to pass forward with the Elders, till he came to Horeb, where, as soon as he should smite a certain rock, it would yield water. Moses, therefore, came to Horeb, and the wonder was accomplished.

While the Israelites remained in Rephidim, the Amalekites, a people living thereabouts, attacked them : but the battle turned in favour of God's people, not through any valour of their own, but the Almighty's aid ; for while the

Israelites

Israelites were fighting, Moses prayed, and while he kept his hands up in the act of supplication, they prevailed ; but when he dropped them, the Amalekites were masters. Moses would have kept his hands up till the battle ended, but he could not ; therefore did his brother Aaron, and another, hold them in that situation for him ; so that, finally, the Israelites, in this first battle they had ever fought, were victors, and the Amalekites at last quite blotted out.

LXIX.

EXODUS xviii.

THE INTERVIEW OF MOSES WITH
HIS FAMILY.

BEFORE CHRIST 1491.

SCENE. *The Country round Mount Horeb.*MOSES, JETHRO, ZIPPORAH, GERSHOM,
and ELIEZER.

JETHRO.

AND therefore did I come ; for since amid the troubles of your people, while in Egypt, you thought fit to send away your wife and

and children, so I judged that, as the Almighty had not only brought you *forth*, but fixed you in a situation of some peace, you would rejoice to have three persons once again restored, who are so dear to you. I might have waited till you came yourself, and visited our habitation, being, as you are, in Horeb: but your wife and little ones were anxious to behold you; and, besides, it was not certain that the care of armies, now devolved upon you, would permit it; therefore did I quit my habitation, with your family, last night, that they might visit you themselves. So take them. Of my keeping, I suppose they have no reason to complain.

Moses. My Zipporah, my wife, once more I bid you welcome to my arms; and you, my Gershom and my Eliezer, be you welcome too. May God shower down his blessings on you.

Jethro. I, for my part, dearest son-in-law, for ever bless him, that the Israelites are thus delivered from their bondage; and by such a wonderful event I know that he is greater than all gods; for while the Egyptians, trusting to their deities of wood and metal, dealt so proudly with you all, He manifested his superiority. But tell me why, when I was present in the morning, you were set above the people, and they standing round you.

Moses.

Moses. Every day they visit me, that they may hear of God: besides, I judge between them, and make known his laws.

Jethro. In truth, dear Moses, I must say, that in so doing, you are wrong: for you will surely wear yourself away: the task is far too heavy for your strength. You cannot, by yourself, go through with such a toil. Give ear then to my voice; for I can counsel you; and God, I trust, will bless the advice I am to give.

Moses. Say on, dear father.

Jethro. Be you in the place of God before the people; but in less affairs, appoint fit men, such men as to your knowledge fear the Lord, men of integrity, and those who entertain no covetings. Let these be authorized to regulate inferior things among the people, and appoint them rulers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and so down to tens.

Moses. I like this counsel well. Who then so fit as you, dear father, to assist me in the chusing of such men? Come then, and let us set about it instantly; for this I know, that doing as you say, I shall be able to endure; whereas, at present, I consume myself insensibly. Once more, come with me therefore: and, dear Zipporah, and you, dear little ones, a third time welcome.

LXX.

EXODUS XX. TO XXXI.

THE DECLARATION OF THE LAW

BY GOD.

BEFORE CHRIST 1491.

MOSES, going back from Horeb to the place called Rephidim, where he had left the Israelites encamped, and thence proceeding with them to the wilderness of Sina, God thought proper there to give them laws. On their arrival near a mountain in this wilderness, God called up Moses, and commanded him to tell the Israelites, that, if they showed themselves a faithful and obedient people, they should always prosper. This, the prophet was enjoined to publish in the congregation's ears. " Go down," said God, " and speak in this wise to their tribes, who then must sanctify themselves; " for, lo, in three days time I will again descend, enveloped with a cloud, and they shall hear me hold communion with thee, and believe for ever. But," continued God, " thou shalt set boundaries about the mountain, and command, that when they are collected round it, they presume not to come forward, nor so much

" much as touch the boundaries, on pain of being stoned to death."

This being told the people, they began to sanctify themselves ; and on the third day afterward, it came to pass, that in the morning there were thunders in the Mount, with lightning ; and a thick black cloud came down and covered it ; of which, the appearance was so awful, that the people in the camp were seized with trembling, which increased upon them ; for Mount Sina, Moses tells us, was entirely on a smoke, because the Lord descended towards it ; and the smoke went up as from a furnace, while the Mount itself in every quarter trembled. In so much, that Moses was the only person who durst venture up. He did so, and the Lord was forty days and forty nights communing with him ; in which space of time he neither ate nor drank.

The laws that God proclaimed on this occasion, through his servant Moses, for the government of Israel, and of which the Ten Commandments, to be mentioned in the following article, make part, are far too numerous for insertion in this publication, since they occupy no less than twelve whole chapters of the book of Exodus, beginning at the twentieth, whereunto the youthful reader is referred, and where too he will find a full description of the tabernacle, ark,

ark, and so forth, which the Almighty ordered Moses to construct, that he might manifest his presence in it to the priests, when they performed the daily sacrifice.

LXXI.

EXODUS xxxii.

**THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL'S
IDOLATRY.**

BEFORE CHRIST 1491.

SCENE. Near the Camp.

AARON and a LEVITE.

The LEVITE.

MOSE, after having been away these forty days, is now returning. He has almost gained the bottom of the Mountain, and the tables of the testimony, as I saw, are in his hands. Bethink yourself, my lord, e'er he attains the camp, what answer shall be made him, touching this idolatry committed by our brethren, and this calf you made them.

Aaron. What could I have done to hinder the idolatry of Israel, which I did not do? Assured-

ly

ly there was a mutinying spirit in them, and my brother's absence aggravated their behaviour : “ Up,” said they, “ and make us gods ; for “ with respect to Moses, who first brought us “ out of Egypt, we know nothing of him.” Saying this, they let me understand they were determined to have something visible, which they might worship ; so intending to prevent their sinning, I encouraged them. I thought, they would consider their good things, their silver and their gold, so precious, as not easily to part with them, even for a god : although experience has proved otherwise. So I assembled them, and said, “ if you indeed require a god, “ he must be worthy of your worship. Break “ me therefore off the golden trinkets that adorn “ the ears, not only of your wives, but children “ likewise, and give up their bracelets, bring- “ ing them to me ; so shall you have indeed a “ god to worship.” Their idolatry, it seems, was greater than their avarice ; and to get themselves a god, they were content to part with every thing in their possession.

The Levite. Hark ! Do I not hear a noise ?

Aaron. A noise ! Why they surround their idol all day long, and hardly grant themselves the season of refreshment. Their idolatry exceeds all measure. Scarcely had I made the calf which they desired to worship, but a shout pre-
vailed

vailed around me ; and such blindnes can idolatry occasion, that they all cried out, as with one voice, " This is the god that brought us out of Egypt."

The Levite. Is it possible ? But see, my lord, I have not misinformed you. Yonder comes your brother, with the tables in his hand. Let us observe him. He must hear these shouts, and naturally will enquire the reason. How I tremble for the consequences ! His great zeal will show itself on the occasion. I am certain of it.— And behold, his servant Joshua having crossed the way, he stops him. Doubtless to enquire the cause of so much bustle in the camp ; and if my eyes see rightly, his whole countenance seems altered as he stands to listen. Ah look, look, my lord, he flings the tables from his hands, and they are broke to pieces. He comes hither, and appears as having lost all temper ! What will be the end of this day's business ! He is here, let us avoid his anger.

Aaron. No, step rather on one side, till I have thought what answer I shall give him. Israel has committed a great sin ; but I am guiltless. (*They withdraw.*)

Moses (running in). Miserable me, that I am thus compelled to mix with wicked men ! I came with laws from God, for the advantage

of

of his people, and they will not be his people; but have made themselves a god. They are unworthy of the power that would protect them. They have lost him, and must have no manner of protection, saving what their god can give them. And my brother! Could he suffer, nay, encourage such a sin? I have done wrong to plead their cause in the Almighty's presence. They are all a stiff necked people, and his justice cannot cut them off too speedily.

Aaron (with the Levite, coming forward).
Oh, brother!

Moses. Are you here, then? What can any one among the Israelites have done, that you should bring so great a sin upon them altogether?

Aaron. Let not your resentment thus wax hot, my lord; but hear me. It is too well known, how prone the people are to wickedness. This wickedness excited them to fix their thoughts upon some other god; "for with respect," said they, "to Moses, who has brought us out of Egypt whither we have come, we know not what has happened to him."—Calm your anger, I beseech you, brother, and still listen to me. What was I to do? I saw the crime of this idolatry already kindled in the hearts of the assembly, and considered that they could not be

more

more guilty in God's sight ; on which account, I fashioned them the calf they are at present worshiping ; and to procure it, they gave up the ear-rings of their wives and children, bracelets, and what not. These I demanded of them, thinking to oppose the avarice, long ago, perhaps, engrafted in their hearts, to this new sin of their idolatry : but nothing would avail me. They had lost you, as they said, for ever ; and must have some god to worship.

Moses. I have heard too much. Who is there on my side ?

The Levite. Your brother, notwithstanding what the people have compelled him to ; and with your brother, all the sons of Levi.

Moses Thus then says the Lord. Let every one of them put on his sword, and slay these worshippers, even all collected round the image. Let them die in the commission of their sin. So God shall have compassion on the rest, and spare them. Go and see so just a punishment inflicted. (*The Levite goes out*).—And you, Aaron, do whatever you are able, to blot out the sin of your compliance. Take this calf, which you have made, and grind it into dust ; then mix it up with water, and let all the Hebrews drink thereof, till there be nothing left. Go, Aaron. Go, my brother, while I make atonement, if I can, to God ; and get his pardon for the people :

ple: but if not, I will entreat him to blot out my name from the eternal book of life, if it be written in it.

LXXII. LXXIII.

EXODUS xxxii. xxxiii. xxxiv.

THE MERCY OF GOD, AND HIS APPEARANCE AT THE PRAYER OF MOSES.

BEFORE CHRIST 1491.

MOSES, to procure the Almighty's pardon for the Israelites' idolatry, of whom three thousand had been put to death, went up again into the Mount, and pleaded in their favour. God relaxed so far as of his grace to promise he would send his angel in the way before them, till they came to Canaan; though, by way of punishing their sins, he would not go himself: but Moses found such favour in his sight, that, on entreaty, he relented, and restored the Israelites to hope, by promising he would precede them, notwithstanding their iniquity had been so great. "Behold," said Moses to the Lord, "thou sayest I have found favour in thy sight.

Is

“ If so, then point me out the way that I may
 “ know thee, and do thou consider likewise
 “ that the Hebrews are thy people.” To this
 supplication of the prophet, God replied, “ My
 “ presence shall attend on thee at least, and I
 “ will give thee rest.” But Moses answered,
 “ if thou go not with us all, let Israel never
 “ move their camp from hence ; for how shall
 “ it be known we are thy people, but because
 “ thou goest with us ? If thy presence be deni-
 “ ed, while we are passing forward, we shall
 “ certainly be separated.” Whereupon, God
 interrupted Moses, saying, “ I repent of my
 “ intended anger, and will do in all things as
 “ thou wishest.”

Moses hitherto, though he had talked with
 God, had never seen him ; for a cloud was what
 concealed him in their conferences. He desired,
 however, now to view him face to face, in all
 his glory ; and durst not intimate his wish. But
 God replied, “ Thou canst not see my face and
 “ live. I will however make my goodness pass
 “ before thee. See this rock. Well : thou
 “ shalt stand thereon, and while my glory pas-
 “ ses, I will put thee in a cleft, and hide thee
 “ with my hand a little, so that thou mayst see
 “ my hinder parts.” This promise did the Al-
 mighty pledge him, and next day the promise

was fulfilled ; for having been commanded to come up again upon the morrow, but without attendant, and in so much privacy, that neither ox, nor any other cattle, should be grazing near the mount, the Lord descended in a cloud, and passing by the place described already, uttered his great name : **THE LORD, THE MERCIFUL, THE GRACIOUS AND LONG SUFFERING GOD.**

To this, the Almighty added an enumeration of the blessings he would crown his people with, if they but proved obedient to his voice, and kept themselves from mixing seed with those inhabiting the lands they should become possessed of, after he had drove them out ; which having promised, he delivered into Moses' hands two other tables, written as before.

With these, he left God's presence, and came down the mountain, after having been away another forty days and nights, and eaten nothing. But the glory he had been a witness to, reflected so much glory on himself, that when he came before the Israelites, they could not look upon his countenance, and bear the lustre of it, till such time as he had put a veil thereon.

LXXIV. LXXV.

THE TABERNACLE, &c. FINISHED ;
NADAB AND ABIHU STRUCK WITH
FIRE FROM HEAVEN, AND THE SE-
COND PASSOVER.

BEFORE CHRIST 1490.

IN the first six months of the year ensuing, that on which the law had been declared by God upon Mount Sina, were the tabernacle, ark, and altar finished, and set up by Moses, who anointed Aaron and his children to discharge the duty of God's priests, as more particularly is related in the thirty-ninth and fortieth chapters of the book of Exodus.

About this time, we are informed by Moses, in Leviticus (the tenth chapter), that Nadab and Abihu, two of Aaron's sons, took each his censer, and put fire therein, with incense over that, and offered up strange fire before the Lord, which he had previously forbid; and which he punished, by destroying them with fire from heaven. Their sin was so enormous, that the people were forbid to mourn their death.

This matter being thus dispatched, the princes

of the people next proceeded to the dedication of the tabernacle, which whole ceremony is related in the seventh of Numbers ; at the close whereof, the prophet introduces God as speaking to him from the mercy-seat within it, and enjoining, among other ordinances, in the eighth, and following chapter, that the people should observe a second passover, in memory of their deliverance out of Egypt.

LXXVI.

NUMBERS xi.

THE MURMUR OF THE ISRAELITES
FOR FLESH.

BEFORE CHRIST 1490.

FROM the thirty-fourth of Exodus, in which **F** is more at large detailed, or written, many of the former articles, as well as through Leviticus, and likewise in the ten first chapters of the book of Numbers, nothing of an interesting kind occurs. In fact, the whole is merely an enumeration of those laws, which were ordained by the Almighty, and wherewith the Israelites were to be governed ; so that we shall pass them over, and proceed to specify another cause

cause of murmur that prevailed among the Jewish people.

Hitherto, a year had not elapsed since their delivery from the hand of Pharaoh, notwithstanding which they had already shown themselves a people wonderfully discontented and ungrateful. It appears from Moses, that the manna they received from heaven, although an instance of God's bounty, now disgusted them, and they were anxious to obtain flesh-meat. This murmuring wearied Moses, who complained to God of the uneasiness his office caused him, in thus governing, without assistance, such a discontented host of men. God therefore bade him write down seventy names, the names of such as he considered capable of aiding him, as elders; saying, "I will take a portion of thy spirit, and transfer it upon them, that they may prophecy, and bear the burthen of the people with thee."

And respecting their repinings at the daily repetition of one food, he ordered Moses to address them in the following terms: "To-morrow, shall ye all have flesh to eat, for seeing ye have wept before the Almighty, asking who should give you flesh to eat; for ye were well, ye said, in Egypt, therefore shall the Lord comply with your request. Ye shall not eat it for

“ one day alone, or two, or five, or ten, or
“ twenty, but a month together, till the food
“ you swallow issues at your nostrils, and is
“ loathsome to you.”

Moses acquiesced with both these orders, and as soon as could be, brought together in one spot those seventy elders (saving two), that God had bid him chuse, and they received the gift of prophecy, as promised ; and not only *they*, but with them those two elders that were left behind, of whom, when Moses was informed, and asked if they should not be silenced, he made answer : “ Do you envy those two men on

“ my account ? Would God but grant that
“ every individual of his people were a pro-
“ phet.”

Thus that business ended ; after which, a wind began to blow, that once more brought up quails in great abundance from the sea. The people, notwithstanding the remembrance of those former quails they had received, were now completely satisfied, and heartily sat down to meat : but “ While the flesh,” says Moses, “ was as yet between their teeth, or not well
“ chewed, God’s wrath was kindled, and he
“ smote the people with a very grievous
“ plague.”

LXXVII.

NUMBERS xii.

THE SEDITION OF AARON AND
MIRIAM.

BEFORE CHRIST 1490.

ARON, and his sister Miriam, took offence at Moses, and displayed a spirit of sedition, by reproving him for having married, as he had, an Ethiopian woman. Aaron, in particular, expressed himself contemptuously, on this occasion, of his brother, saying, “ Is “ my brother, and he only, through the host, a “ prophet? Am not I one also?” This refractory behaviour the Almighty punished with severity in Miriam’s person: but we do not find that Aaron, who partook of the offence, shared likewise in the woman’s punishment. Both they and Moses were all summoned to the tabernacle of the congregation, and the Lord came down as usual in a cloud, and standing at the door, began as follows: “ Hear ye now my “ words. If in the camp there be a prophet, I “ will speak to him in visions: but to Moses, “ I will show myself in person. Why then
“ were

“ were ye not afraid to speak against him, as
“ ye have? With this, the cloud departed, and
“ when Aaron looked on Miriam, she was le-
“ perous, white as snow.”

“ Alas, my lord,” said Aaron, “ lay not, I
“ beseech you, this iniquity upon us, though
“ we have both acted foolishly, and sinned a-
“ gainst God. Let not our sister be as one
“ whose flesh is half consumed, before she quits
“ her mother’s womb.”

And Moses cried to God, beseeching he
would heal her.

When the Lord made answer: “ If her fa-
“ ther had but spit upon her in the face, and
“ nothing further, should she not have been
“ ashamed, seven days? Let her be therefore
“ kept without the camp for those seven days,
“ and after that, admitted.”

This was done; and from regard to Moses,
we are told, that till his sister was again brought
in, the people did not recommence their jour-
ney from the wilderness of Sina, where they still
remained.

LXXVIII. LXXIX.

NUMBERS xiii. xiv.

THE SPIES SENT FORTH TO SEARCH
THE LAND OF CANAAN, AND THE
PEOPLE'S CONDUCT AFTER THEIR
REPORT.

BEFORE CHRIST 1490.

THE Israelites, departing from their last encampment, and arriving in the wilderness of Paran, God commanded them to send twelve men (from every tribe a man) that they might gain some knowledge of the land they were to be possessed of. After forty days, when they had finished their survey, the spies came back, and all but two reported, that the country flowed indeed with milk and honey, but was not to be subdued. On this, the murmurs of the people were so far renewed, that they durst charge the providence of God with bringing them into the wilderness for their destruction. Those two men, however, just before excepted, Joshua and Caleb, contradicted the relation of the others, telling them, that if the Lord were favourable, Canaan might be easily possessed; and finished, with

with exhorting them to cease from their rebellion against God. For this, the people who were fixed to chuse another leader, and return to Egypt, would have stoned them, if the glory of the Lord had not appeared and checked their rage. For such reiterated thanklessness, the Almighty told them, that excepting those not more than twenty years of age, with Joshua and Caleb, no one individual of their number should survive, to enter on the promised land, but die by pestilence, by sword or famine, in the wilderness ; and not this only, but that those below the age of twenty, who, as just now mentioned, should survive, to enter on the promised land, should be condemned to wander in the wilderness ; no less than forty years, before this period of their rest.

The people, having heard this menace, mourned exceedingly ; and some considered they might make atonement for their diffidence of God, by joining in a body, and immediately attempting to possess themselves of Canaan. Therefore, did they rise betimes next morning, and ascend a mountain, near the place of their encampment, saying, “ We are here, and will possess ourselves of that good country, which the Lord hath promised us. And this endeavour is a debt we owe to God, for our past conduct ; having sinned so grievously.”

Moses

Moses asked them, why they were determined to transgress the Lord's commandment. " Go not up," said he, " for God is not among you. If you venture, you will all be smitten of your enemies ; for the Amalekites, and Canaanites are there before you. Therefore shall ye fall, because ye have departed from the Lord." But they persisted still in their design, when the Amalekites and Canaanites, who had possessed the mountain, rushed upon them, conquered, and pursued them to a place, called Hormah. Such was the immediate punishment inflicted, first, upon their doubt of the Almighty's providence, and, secondly, upon their violation of his will in going out to fight.*

* After this transaction, we have no precise account, as hitherto, of what the Hebrews did, or were concerned in ; for as yet, not quite two years were passed, since they had left the land of Egypt ; notwithstanding which, they had encamped in more than thirty different places, while in the succeeding seven and thirty years, they changed the place of their encampment only seventeen times. They must have therefore stayed whole years in many of them. It was doubtless in this interval of time, that what is to be mentioned in the four succeeding articles, took place. At the completion of this period, making up (except a very little portion) the whole forty years they were to wander in the desert, having compassed the hill country Seir and Edom, they arrived at Zin, about one thousand four hundred and fifty-two years before the birth of Christ.

LXXX.

NUMBERS XV.

THE SABBATH BREAKER STONED.

WHILE the children of Israel were in the wilderness, some among them, we are told by Moses, found a man that either was, or had been, gathering sticks upon the sabbath day, which being an infringement of the fourth command, they apprehended him ; and being brought before the congregation, Moses, and his brother Aaron, ordered him to be confined, that God might let them know what punishment should be inflicted on him : when the Lord directed Moses to the following purport. He shall die. The congregation shall go forth without the camp, and stone him. This was God's injunction, and the congregation executed it accordingly.

LXXXI.

LXXXI. LXXXII.

NUMBERS XVI.

THE PUNISHMENT OF KORAH, DA-
THAN, AND ABIRAM, AND OF
THOSE WHO MURMURED AT IT.

BEFORE CHRIST 1471.

SCENE. *Without the Camp.*

ELIEZER and JOSHUA.

JOSHUA.

A Fearful silence reigns in every quarter of the camp, even more than what is usual at the hour of midnight.

Eliezer. Yea, a silence—such as follows the commission of some crime, that has, with justice, brought destruction down upon the perpetrators' heads ; and yet can you, without an oath on the relater's part, believe it, Joshua?—though the Lord has wrought a signal vengeance in our camp, no less so, than if Nature's course had been inverted to produce the terrible event that happened yesterday, amid this silence, other criminals are met in confu-

N

tation

tation to incense the Lord still further, by disputing his prerogative to punish such as violate his positive commandments.

Joshua. What has happened of so terrible a nature? Tell me, Eliezer. I arrived, you know, not earlier than last night from Canaan, whither I was sent expressly, by my master Moses, upon business that related to the spies dispatched before me thither; and am therefore unapprized of what has been transacted in the camp since I set out. Inform me therefore, what so dreadful in itself has passed among you, and of which the consequences likewise are so dreadful?

Eliezer. The narration will be somewhat long. Give ear, however; and as well as I am able, I will satisfy you, though my soul recoils at the idea. In the first place then, dear Joshua, I imagine you know Korah?

Joshua. Korah, son of Izhar? to no man

Eliezer. He. Of him, with Dathan and Abiram, I design to speak. These three, affecting an equality of rank, not only with my father Aaron, but your master likewise, and displeased that they should take so much upon them, as they said, persuaded certain men about them to associate in their cause; and being joined with many princes of the congregation, to

the

the number of twelve score and upwards, came together yesterday ; when Korah, speaking for the rest, and claiming to be heard, addressed himself to Moses and my father, in the following manner : “ Ye forget yourselves : ye take “ too much upon you, seeing the whole con-
“ gregation to a man are holy, and the Lord
“ is among them. Why then, in this manner,
“ do ye arrogate a dignity, in point of place
“ and honour, not belonging to you ? ”

Joshua. Was it in this manner, Korah spake ?

Eliezer. I have detailed you faithfully his very words. And when my Lord, your master, heard him, he fell down upon his face ; but rising quickly after, said to Korah and his company : “ E'er evening will the Almighty shew “ who, in reality, are his, or who are holy. “ And the man he shall make choice of, will “ he summon to him. This then do ye, “ Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and all you “ that have combined together thus. Take “ censers, putting fire therein, with incense “ on the fire ; and it shall come to pass, that “ he whom the Almighty chuses, and no other, “ shall be holy. Do we take too much upon “ us ? No : we trust we do not ; but what “ perfectly we know is this, that *you*, *you* “ Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, take too “ much upon you.”

Joshua. And what answered they to this ?

Eliezer. They stood quite silent ; for my Lord was bold, and seemed as if the mouths of all the assembly, on his side, were with him. Turning, therefore, in particular to Korah, who you know is of the tribe of Levi, he continued : “ Hear me, son of Levi : seems it “ such a trifling matter to you, that the God “ of Israel has exalted you so high above the “ congregation, as to bring you nearer to him- “ self, by making you his minister ; but you “ must seek the priesthood also ; for which “ cause, both you and all your company are “ met against the Lord ; for what am I, or “ what is Aaron, that you murmur against “ us ? ”

Joshua. And answered Korah nothing to all this ?

Eliezer. No. Korah still kept silence ; but the partner of his crime, thus speaking both for him and Dathan, answered : “ Seems it, Moses, “ such a trifling thing to *you* then, that in this “ wise, you have brought us up from Egypt, “ from a land that flowed with milk and “ honey, to destroy us in this dreary wilder- “ ness ; but you must seek (both you and Aaron) “ to erect yourselves above the congregation, “ just as if you were two princes ? You have “ falsified

“ falsified your word. You promised you
 “ would bring us to a region flowing more
 “ abundantly than what we left, with milk and
 “ honey ; but you have not done it. Seek ye
 “ then to put our eyes out ? We have all en-
 “ dured your tyranny too long.”

Joshua. And what said Moses to this charge ?

Eliezer. But little : his discourse was prin-
 cipally to the congregation ; for the glory of
 the Lord descended on the tabernacle, and a
 voice was heard, enjoining him and Aaron to
 withdraw that instant from among the people,
 that his vengeance might consume them in a
 moment. But they both fell down upon their
 faces, saying (for I heard their supplications) :
 “ Oh thou God of spirits, wilt thou utterly
 “ destroy a people for the wickednesses of some
 “ few among them ? ” This was all they
 spoke ; for Moses, taught of the Almighty,
 rose, and earnestly adjured the people to depart
 from the infectious tents of Korah and his
 company.

Joshua. And did they ?

Eliezer. You shall hear. By this time, were
 the wives and little ones of Korah and his party
 crowding round the tents ; and those twelve
 score and upwards I first mentioned, had, at
 Moses' intimation, got their censers ready, and

at some small distance were preparing for the sacrifice, that every one might know which of them God would chuse, while Moses and my father too had each his censer: shortly after which, inspired as it should seem by God, and with a voice that those in the remotest quarter of the congregation might have heard, in this wise spake your master: " Now shall it be known, on what authority your leader has proceeded hitherto; for of myself have I done nothing. If these men should die like others, or be visited as they are, I confess the Lord hath not, in that case, sent me; but provided he perform a wonder, and the earth beneath us open to receive them, it shall then be understood, I have at all times acted by his will." These words were scarcely spoke, when horrible to tell, or even think of! did the earth about them cleave asunder, and take in not only Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, but the partners of their wickedness, together with their wives and children, who went down, and perished from among the congregation, while a fire descended from the Lord, and burnt those others who had got their censers ready. Thus was the rebellion of these wicked people punished.

Joshua. And this punishment, dear Eliezer,

as

as you know, is not the first inflicted on our people for their sin, in thus rebelling. When will Israel be taught righteousness?

Eliezer. Well may you ask that question, since at present, in the camp there is another complot hatching, and another punishment, no doubt, in preparation for it: to which complot and its punishment, the fearful silence that now reigns about us, is no other than a prelude. But how wears the morning?

Joshua. Soon, if I mistake not, will the sun be rising.

Eliezer. It will rise to see this complot put in execution; and the murmurers, at that punishment which was inflicted yesterday, want only such a signal to come forth, and shew themselves, though every one not mixing with them has good cause to apprehend they will bring down a punishment, perhaps more dreadful on themselves. There are some thousands of them leagued together to appoint another leader, and return to their captivity in Egypt.

Joshua. Are they still so fond of oppression?

Eliezer. Proper question! But here comes my father. Will you tarry here, or in your tent, expect the issue of this morning's business?

Joshua. In my tent, dear Eliezer, I will wait;

wait; or possibly, my master, when he hears I am returned from Canaan, may send for me. Till we next see one another, then, adieu.

Eliezer. Adieu, dear Joshua (*Joshua goes out*). My father seems more thoughtful than is usual with him; but that needs not make me wonder; for I see the sun is rising, and with day light this conspiracy is to begin.—(*To Aaron coming in*). Good morrow to my dear, dear father.

Aaron. A good morrow cannot follow such a night. How is it with you, Eliezer? Have yet any of these murmurers come abroad?

Eliezer. I have not yet seen any.

Aaron. You will soon behold them; for the sun is up. They have had time enough to brood on their sedition during darkness, and are eager for the day, that is to light them on to its completion. Take you care, dear Eliezer, and be ready when I send to see you.

Eliezer. Yes, dear father.

Aaron. Have you, in the interval, given order that the censers of those men, who perished yesterday by fire in Korah's party, be disposed of as the Lord appointed?

Eliezer. They have all been put together in one place, and will this morning be delivered to the workmen.—

Aaron. See it done directly, Eliezer; for whatever

whatever was the fortune of their wretched owners, they were, notwithstanding, dedicated to God's service, and must therefore be accounted holy. Let the workmen beat them into plates, by way of covering for the altar, so shall they hold out a warning, that no *stranger*, for the time to come, draw near it, and do sacrifice, if he would shun the punishment of Korah and his partners.

Eliezer. Father, I observe two men approaching. They must be of the conspirators. Will you withdraw?

Aaron. No, son: though they should be conspirators, they are but two; and, therefore, we need hardly fear them. Keep you only with me. You are in the right. Their looks proclaim them; and, perhaps, they come to seek my brother, with proposals from their party. I will answer for him. Stand close by me.

Enter two Conspirators.

First Conspirator. What! he is not here! we may, however, speak our minds upon this subject to his brother.

Aaron. Yes indeed, *that* may you. But first tell me, is it peace or war you come to offer?

First Conspirator. Peace! what peace have we to offer, while this Moses and yourself, but more particularly Moses, hold us at your mercy,

and appoint us to be slain, whenever you think fit, as you would do so many sheep?

Second Conspirator. Witness the murders perpetrated yesterday upon us, in addition to preceding slaughter. Ye keep killing, when ye please, the people of the Lord: but yesterday—

Eliezer. Oh horrible!

Aaron. Let me speak, Eliezer. We keep killing them? Did we then—did myself, or Moses, since you brand him with the greater guilt, did Moses, I repeat, inflict on Korah and his party yesterday's destructive work? Have I or Moses any power upon the earth or elements, to order them, as we think fit? Did not the ground cleave all at once in twain, and fire come down from heaven? And is the fire of heaven at our disposal?

First Conspirator. Doubtless, those black arts the Egyptian people practise, have endowed you with the power of working specious miracles; but they are all seen into.

Second Conspirator. Not less so than those of the Egyptians, who, at Pharoah's order, flung their rods down on the ground, and turned them into serpents, with so many other miracles which they performed, as well as you and Mofes. Were we ever taught to look upon them as God's instruments? Why, therefore, should the power of working miracles give you a character

character of holiness? For our parts, we consider them suggested by the evil spirit.

Aaron. Impious argument! Dare you blaspheme the God of your forefathers in this manner? But it seems, these miracles, when operating to your benefit, were then the exertion of God's power. When on your flight from Egypt, you beheld the sea divide its billows, and afford you a safe passage to the other side, and when the rock was smote in Horeb, and your thirst removed by such a miracle, then God was to be praised for his abundant love: but now, that Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, have incurred the punishment, with which Almighty justice has thus visited the sin of their rebellion, Moses and myself must be accused of murder! Think not we are frightened at your menaces. If we are homicides, the Almighty must have acted with us. Tremble therefore, lest a punishment, more terrible than that of yesterday, befall your wickednesses.—But what shriek was that? Another and another? Is destruction in the camp? See Eliezer: Run—or stay; for here comes Joshua.

Joshua (entering hastily). Oh my lord! my lord! Heaven's wrath is in the camp! A grievous pestilence has, in a moment, been inflicted on the murmurers at yesterday's events!

First Conspirator. A pestilence! This is a trick to fright us: but come, brother, and as fitting, let us see what truth there is in this report.

Second Conspirator. A pestilence! Oh we shall know that shortly. (*The two Conspirators go out.*)

Aaron. They are gone, and will no doubt discover the reality of what you tell us.

Joshua. What I tell you is too real. A disease attacks them even now, where they are met in consultation, and they fall by hundreds; scarcely having time to give a groan. Here comes, my lord, your brother.

Moses (entering hastily). Hasten, Aaron. Take a censer in your hand, put fire into it from the altar, and go in among the congregation; for the Lord has sent his wrath abroad, and while I speak, a plague has seized upon the murmurers at Korah's punishment. Haste, Aaron, stay not to reply; but make this moment an atonement for them. Go you, Eliezer, join with Aaron at the door, while he is offering sacrifices for the people's sins, and in the tabernacle; I myself will pray to God that this affliction may be turned aside, and their transgressions pardoned. Possibly the Lord may hear my supplication, notwithstanding Israel be rebellious. Haste, make haste.

and his rod blossomed, and the rods of the bush sprang out. **LXXXIII.** between them and himself he set the tabernacle, and the bush stood on the side of it. **NUMBERS XVII.**

AARON'S TITLE TO THE PRIESTHOOD PROVED BY MIRACLE.

BEFORE CHRIST 1471.

TO stop the mouth of murmur, and prevent, in future, all gainsaying on the right of Aaron to the priesthood, God commanded Moses saying: " Speak to Israel; and " from every one, require a rod, according to " their tribes; from every tribe a rod, " and " write on each the name; which being done, " deposit them within the tabernacle, when " to-morrow I will meet you: And the rod " of him I have made choice of, will I make " to blossom: So shall all the murmurers of " the Israelites, not only against Aaron, but " you likewise, cease." This Moses told the people, and proceeded just as he was ordered. And it came to pass, that on the morrow, Moses went into the tabernacle, and brought out the rods, when every tribe receiving back their rod, beheld that Aaron's, in the night, had budded, and even then, in some parts, yielded almonds.

almonds. This, the people saw, and for a time, repented of their late repinings. And the Lord commanded that the rod should be preserved, by way of token, to confound such rebels as in future might rise up and controvert that title to the priesthood, which was vested in the tribe of Levi.

LXXXIV. LXXXV.

NUMBERS XX.

THE SIN OF MOSES AND AARON, AND
THE RESIGNATION OF THE LAST.

BEFORE CHRIST 1452.

SCENE. *A Mountain.*

AARON and ELIEZER.

ELIEZER.

HERE is the place, dear father, where this last sad duty, on our part, is to be paid you.

Aaron. Grieve not for my sake, dear son; for I am old, and die with pleasure. Happy in the interval, if, by such resignation, I may reconcile

reconcile my Master whom my sin displeased at Meribah.

Eliezer. Alas! alas!

Aaron. Once more, dear Eliezer, grieve not for my sake; for I am anxious to be gathered to my people. I have had my troubles in this life. God's providence appointed me his priest, but that appointment drew down the repining of a people on my head. I was enabled to discharge it, so as to conciliate the Almighty; but, at last, I sinned, and was cut off from seeing that good land, he had been pleased to promise Israel. I deserved to be cut off. Accept, O God, my resignation, as some small atonement for my sin. I long to be no more; for then, I trust, I shall have suffered my whole punishment, and thou wilt be appeased. Are they yet coming, Eliezer?

Eliezer. I believe I see them. Yes, dear father, they are nigh at hand.

Aaron. They cannot be too nigh.

Eliezer. Prepare then to receive them.

Aaron. There requires no preparation. In the name of God, let them appear; for I am ready, and demur not to that disposition of me, he thinks fitting to ordain. (*To them—enter Moses, Joshua, and the Heads of the twelve Tribes.*)

Moses.

Moses. How fares it, dearest brother, with you? This will prove a melancholy day to every one among us.

Aaron. Call it not a melancholy day, dear brother; for take notice, and lay up in your remembrance what I am about to urge, before we part for ever: notice it, I say; and not you only, brother, but you princes of the congregation likewise, namely: that so often having recommended resignation to God's justice in the ear of others, it would ill become me to exhibit, in myself, an instance of dissatisfaction, now that the Almighty is about to lay his hand upon me, and will speedily allot my portion with the dead. The rest my brother will make known, while I keep silence; for indeed, much speaking does not suit my present situation. Spare me, therefore, princes of the congregation, and attend to what my brother shall say for me. It is all the legacy I have to leave you.

Moses. My dear brother here, is on the point of being taken from among us. God has signified his pleasure to that purpose; and his purpose we should all religiously submit to. "Aaron," were his words, when late last night his glory rested on the tabernacle, " shall be gathered to his people: he shall die; for, " as

“ as already I have told you in my wrath, he
“ shall not enter that good land I promised to
“ the Israelites, because at Meribah both he
“ and thou rebelled against my word. Take,
“ therefore, Aaron, with his son,” continued
God, “ and bring them up into Mount Hor;
“ when, stripping Aaron of his garments, thou
“ shalt put them on his son.” Lo, therefore,
he is now come up into the mountain. Eliezer
too is here, prepared to take his father’s robe
of office; after which, the good old man will
lay his head down full of peace: but having
been your teacher almost during his whole life,
the legacy he wishes to bestow upon you, is a
death full likewise of instruction. Are you,
princes, in fit frame of mind, and willing to
receive it?

First Prince. Speak: we will not interrupt
you.

Second Prince. We are all attention.

Moses. To afford you, therefore, this in-
struction, let me freely, though affectionately,
call to your remembrance what has happened
since the thousand and seven hundred fell for
murmuring at the punishment of Korah and
his company; for which, as well as former
trespasses, if they were grievous sins, you have
been punished grievously; not very likely in
yourselves.

yourselves, but in the person of so many dear and precious to you, that have, every one, paid down their life for the offences they committed. Aaron therefore, in this wish, that from his death may flow a useful lesson, means not to go further back than that event which will, among your tribes, be long remembered. Hear a brief description of whatever has been brought about since that, and let your sensibility reflect particularly on the single circumstance most suited to excite it. I, for my part, shall not point it out. Come hither, Joshua, and make answer to my questions, for the instruction of this princely company. When we arrived at Zin, what happened there? Speak briefly, Joshua.

Joshua. It was there, my lord, your sister Miriam yielded up her spirit.

Moses. It was there, indeed, she underwent God's sentence, namely: that of those six hundred thousand who were freed in Egypt from the yoke, so few should live to enter on the land of promise; notwithstanding which, though Aaron, and myself, were mourning for the loss of one so precious to us both, how did the congregation sympathize in our distress, when they discovered they were visited by the Almighty with a lack of water? Speak you, *Joshua,*

Joshua, still ; for you will never, I am sure, forget the murmurs of the people, pointed as they were against your master and his brother.

Joshua. "Would to God," they said, "we had but died before the Lord, as many of our brethren have already died. And wherefore have ye brought us out into this wilderness, that we should suffer famine ; for is this a land of seed or figs, or vines, or even water ?"

Moses. Faithfully related. And when God commanded us to smite the rock, that Israel might have drink sufficient for themselves and cattle, and when, taking notice with what prevalence the crime of murmuring at God's will infected our whole host, that we ourselves were led to murmur at it, what was the result ?

Joshua. The Almighty thundered in this manner his rebuke : "Since neither you, nor Aaron, have abstained from dissidence, or sought to sanctify me in the presence of my people, neither shall yourself, or Aaron, live to bring them whither I had promised you should come."

Aaron. A zeal for the prosperity of my beloved countrymen, when I am in the grave, provokes me to break silence, and address you yet once more. Oh princes, warn your tribes, in future, to

refrain

refrain from murmuring at their priest, since I, who bore that title nearly forty years, am, for their sakes at last, become obnoxious to the Almighty's wrath. What have I had since such my elevation, save indeed superior cares? And now—But I perceive you feel for the ungrateful conduct of your tribes, and shall pursue the theme no more. Take, Eliezer, take my robes; and may the obedience of the people you shall lead henceforward in my stead,—may that obedience make them for the time to come sit light upon you. I have done. Farewell, my brethren. In a cave that has been hollowed for me in the rock, no great way distant, will I breathe my last, as very quickly I shall do. To-morrow, you may very possibly see him, who was your teacher, stretched upon the ground. Words may suffice for ordinary separations; but the heart is too much swelled with grief at such as this is, to express what it endures. Dear brother, and dear son, give me your time at present; for to-morrow I shall certainly not need it. And once more, you too that till now have been the partners of my life, farewell.

LXXXVI.

NUMBERS XXI.

THE PLAGUE OF FIERY SERPENTS.

BEFORE CHRIST 1452.

ARON being dead, his brother, who but just before had craved a passage for the Israelites through Edom, but could not obtain it, was prepared to take another way. And now the Canaanite, King Arad, fell upon them; but they put his people to the rout, and utterly laid waste their cities; after which, they carried on their journey not the nearest way, which lay through Edom, but between it and the sea. This way discouraged them, by reason of its difficulties; so that here again, they murmured; wherefore, God sent fiery serpents to annoy them; but no sooner were they sorry, and repented, than he ordered Moses to erect a brazen serpent: upon which, whoever looked that had been bitten, should recover. In the sequel, they arrived at Pisgah, after nine encampments, and entreated of the Amorites a passage through their country; but their king, called Sihon, issued forth against them. Being thus

thus compelled to fight, the Israelites were crowned with conquest, and obtained possession of the land. Soon after this transaction, Og, the king of Bashan, took the field against them; but they did to Og as they had done before to Sihon. And, in this wise did the Israelites get footing in the land of promise.

LXXXVII.

NUMBERS xxii.

BALAK'S MESSAGES TO BALAAM.

BEFORE CHRIST 1451.

SCENE. *The House of Balaam.*

THREE ELDERS.

FIRST ELDER.

THIS is our second message; which, I fear, will be as fruitless as the first.

Second Elder. If so, then woe to Moab and our master, with the Midianites, near neighbours as they are to Moab; for this Israel, like an ox, that eateth up the grass all round it, will consume both lands, and serve our people as they have the Amorites and Bashanites before us.

Third Elder. They are come from Bashan, and

and by pitching on the plains of Moab, intimate what they intend to do. But here comes Balaam.

First Elder to Balaam (coming in). Once more, prophet, hail. Thus faith again our master Balak: Thus the son of Zippor. “ Though already my request has been refused, let nothing, I entreat, prevent your coming to me; for these Israelites have pitched their camp close by my city, and they cover the whole land. I know that every one you curse shall really be cursed; and, once again, intreat, that if you would preserve my kingdom from destruction, I may see you.”

Balaam. He shall see me, Elders; for the Lord last night appeared to me while I was sleeping, and foretold your coming, therefore will I go.

First Elder. How, prophet, shall we understand this promise? When before our master sent us, were not these your words? “ Lodge here this night, and I will tell you on the morrow whether I consent to go or not;” and in the morning, were not likewise these your words; for we remember them: “ Rise, Elders, and be gone; for God will not permit my going with you?”

Balaam. Yes, good Elders, I did say so; but the Lord now gives me leave.—And yet—

First

276. BALAK'S MESSAGES TO BALAAM.

First Elder. Yet what? no particular division
Balaam. Small hope on this occasion is there
for your master; for whatever it may please the
Lord to have me say, that I shall say; and no-
thing further.

Second Elder. We have brought you, as be-
fore, from Moab, the rewards of divination;
but much greater.

Third Elder. And our master promises that
if you will but curse this people for him, he
will raise you to the highest pitch of honour.

Balaam. What avail, alas, his promises of
honour, if God's will close up my lips; for
granting he would give me his whole house
filled full of gold, I neither can say more nor
less than what the Lord shall tell me. I will
go however. Stay you therefore here this night,
or instantly return, as you think fit, and I will
follow in the morning.

First Elder. We will instantly return, and
comfort Balak's heart with hope of your ap-
pearance early in the morning.

Balaam. Do so, since you judge it meet; and
early in the morning, Balak may depend on
seeing me. Farewell, then, for this night to
every one of you.

Second Elder. And farewell you too, prophet.

LXXXVIII. LXXXIX.

NUMBERS XXII. XXIII.

THE ASS ENDUED WITH SPEECH,
AND BALAAM'S INTERVIEW WITH
BALAK.

BEFORE CHRIST 1451.

SCENE. *A high place.*

BALAK, and behind him BALAAM.

BALAK.

YES truly would I ; for although your coming, as I wished, rejoices me, yet still I cannot but feel some surprise that you consented not when first I sent to fetch you.

Balaam. I refused, indeed, till you had sent a second time ; but now, that I am come, what power have I, as of myself, on this occasion, to say any thing ? The words God puts into my mouth am I to utter and no other.

Balak. Stand here, Prophet, where I am. This is our place of worship ; and from hence may you behold how far the encampment of this people is stretched out. Here is an altar I have built for you, and one, right opposite, for me.

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O

Balaam.

Balaam. Go stand then by your altar, as I will by mine. The Lord will teach me what to say ; but should I keep long silence, neither wonder, nor yet interrupt me.—(*After a long pause*) Balak, king of Moab, hath sent for me out of Aram, in the eastern mountain, saying : “ Come and curse me Jacob ;” but what curse can I denounce upon a people whom the Lord hath not thought fit to curse. Upon the other hand, their seed shall be innumerable, while the sons of Moab hardly find a place among the nations.

Balak. What have you been saying ? I intreated you to curse my enemies, and you have blessed them altogether !

Balaam. Was it not my duty to speak only what the Lord commanded me ? Did I not say I would do so ?

Balak. Come.—Yonder is another place allotted for our worship, and two altars likewise : peradventure you may curse me them from thence. Go with me, therefore, Balaam, thither, you may there behold the number of our enemies.

Balaam. Yes, Balak, I will go ; and, in the way, relate what strange event I met with coming hither. It will shew how the Almighty is concerned in every thing I do, and by what means he awes me.

Balak.

Balak. Well then, say it.

Balaam. I was riding on my ass, and had approached about half way to Moab, when the creature, on a sudden, turned aside ; on which, I smote her with my staff. Again : I had not got much farther, when, behold, as I was passing on between two walls, the beast began to be unruly for the second time, and crushed my foot ; on which I smote her as before. And once again : as we were going forward in a narrow path, she fell down under me. At this, my wrath was kindled, and I smote her the third time ; when, wonderful to tell ! her mouth was opened by the Lord, and turning as she lay upon the ground, she asked me wherefore I had smitten her ? “ Because,” said I, “ thou soughtest to mock me, and I would “ I had a sword that I might kill thee.” I had hardly said these words, when lo, my eyes were opened, and I saw God’s angel, with a naked sword, before me, standing in the way. Astonished, I bowed down my head to worship, when the angel asked me, why I had thus served my ass ? “ Behold,” said he, “ I put myself “ before her, and provided she had not sunk “ down, I should have killed her master, of “ whose way the Lord does not approve. He “ bade thee go ’tis true, but his permission was

“ intended to bring on thy punishment, be-
“ cause thou hopedst Balak would reward thee ;
“ but thy beast has saved thee from the punish-
“ ment.” “ Alas,” said I, with fear and
trembling, “ I have sinned I own ; but I was
“ far from thinking any one opposed me in the
“ way. Now therefore, as the Lord is angry,
“ I will get me back again.” “ Not so,”
replied the angel, “ thou shalt go ; but what
“ God puts into thy thoughts, that shalt thou
“ speak when thou art come to Balak.” And
at this the angel disappeared. Judge then
yourself.

Balak. Was it in truth an angel?—But, at present, we have reached the place.

Balaam. You will persist then notwithstanding this strange tale. Stand therefore by your altar, while I stand by mine ; and, as before, keep silence.

Balak (after a long pause). Well, hath God said any thing?

Balaam. He hath ; but still preserves his purpose with regard to those that are thy enemies ; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind. Behold, I have received command to bless, and I *must* bless ; for divination shall not stand against the sons of Jacob. They are all fierce beasts of prey.

Balak.

Balak. This second time, then, you have disappointed me: but if you will not curse my enemies, do not at least thus bless them.

Balaam. Did I not (once more) inform you, that the words God put into my mouth I would declare before you, and no other?

Balak. Flee then back to Aram. I had thought of placing you a least in honour; but your God hath kept you back from honour!

Balaam. And on my part, told I not your messengers, that if you would bestow upon me your whole house filled full of gold, I neither could say more or less than what the Lord might tell me? Come now, therefore, and here standing, I will prophecy how these your enemies will serve the Moabites in future days. There shall proceed a star from Jacob, and a scepter shall be waved by Israel over Moab. From his seed shall rise a ruler with dominion, that shall root out every one remaining in the city. Amalek, I look on thee, and prophecy that, notwithstanding thou wast first among the nations, yet thy latter end shall be no less deplorable, than that of one who perishes for ever. On you, Kenites, too, I look, and prophecy that, though your dwelling-place is strong, and though you place your nest within the hollow of a rock, yet shall you finally be

wasted, and laid low. This is the prophecy of Balaam. Farewell Balak. I go back to Aram, and do you go likewise to your place. (*He goes out*).

Balak. Despiteful day! That I should sue to have a prophet curse my enemies, and he, believing thus my expectation, altogether bless them three times over. But no matter, we must do without his curses.

XC.

NUMBERS XXV.

THE WHOREDOM AND IDOLATRY OF ISRAEL.

BEFORE CHRIST 1451.

WHILE the Israelites remained in Moab, they were so forgetful of the Lord, as to commit the sin of whoredom, with the women of the land, who were excited to inveigle them by Balaam; since whatever he had yet performed for Israel's benefit, was at the impulse of his fear; because, at first, he importuned the Almighty for permission to denounce a curse upon that people, and left

Aram

Aram for that purpose: neither did he drop the intention he had formed, before his asfs acquired the gift of speaking, when the angel, sent by God, reproved his disobedience; but soon after, changing conduct, he set on the Moabitish women to seduce the men of Israel; so that, as already mentioned, they committed frequent whoredoms with them, and not only *that*, but fell so greatly off from their religion, as to bow themselves before the god called Baal. The Almighty, as a punishment for these enormities, sent forth another plague into the camp, that cut off twenty and four thousand men. Among the number of those men committing whoredom, was an Israelite called Zimri, who, although the plague was at its height among his brethren, had a Moabitish woman in his tent, of which when Phinehas, Aaron's grandson, and the son of Eliezer, was informed, he took a javelin in his hand, and thrust them both together through and through; which zeal so pleased the Almighty, that he stayed the plague, and made a covenant with Phinehas, giving both to him and to his seed, that should succeed him, a perpetual priesthood. After which, he bade the Israelites wage war against the Moabites till they had utterly destroyed them.

XCI. XCII. XCIII.

NUMBERS XXVI. XXVII.

THE ENUMERATION OF THE HEBREWS. THE LAW OF INHERITANCE, AND APPOINTMENT OF A SUCCESSOR TO MOSES.

BEFORE CHRIST 1451.

EIGHT and thirty years, or very near about that period, after the enumeration of the Hebrews on their quitting Egypt, Moses was commanded, for the second time, to take their numbers, which he did, and found that, not including those beneath the age of twenty, and the Levites, they amounted to six hundred and one thousand, seven hundred and thirty, which was not two thousand more than they amounted to when first enumerated; but a circumstance that cannot but be wondered at, is this: that of the whole six hundred thousand that existed at their first deliverance from the land of Egypt, none but Moses, Joshua, and Caleb, were surviving. All the rest had perished by the plague, the sword, or famine.

Some

Some time after this, an incident took place, that gave occasion to the law, as still subsisting, of inheritance. Five daughters sued for the possession of their father, who had left no son; and Moses, by instruction from the Lord, enjoined that if a man should die and leave no son, his daughter should succeed to what he was possessed of; if he had no daughter, in that case his brother's claim should be admitted; if he had no brother, then his father's brother should succeed, and so forth, as is mentioned in the 27th of Numbers, at the 8th and following verses.

It was near about this time, that God commanded Moses to go up Mount Abarim, that he might see the Promised Land; which satisfaction he would grant him, though his sin at Meribah had cut him off from living to possess it. Moses, though by this he knew his death drew nigh, so far from yielding to complaint, besought that God would name a leader for the Jewish people in his stead. The Lord complied, and nominated Joshua, who succeeded Moses, on his death.

XCIV.

NUMBERS XXXI.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE MEDI-
DIANITES.

BEFORE CHRIST 1451.

MOSES, being ordered by the Almighty to avenge the Hebrews, on the inhabitants of Midian, which when done, he should be gathered to his people, he assigned twelve thousand men, and Phinehas at their head, to go against them ; having strictly ordered that the conquered party, which he knew the Midianites would prove, should be, without distinction, put to death. They marched upon the expedition ; and, succeeding in it, put to death their different princes, and among them, Zur, the father of that Moabitish woman spoken of in article the 90th, with the prophet Balaam, and in fine, with every living soul, except the women and their children ; which, when Moses came to know, it made him wroth : however, he commanded them to put, among the children, every male to death, and every woman who was not a virgin ; saying that these last, which

which they were ordered to destroy, had made them sin, and were the reason of that plague they underwent in Moab.

XCV.

NUMBERS XXXII.

TWO TRIBES AND A HALF SETTLED
IN THE PROMISED LAND.

BEFORE CHRIST 1451.

THE whole country, which lay on that side of the River Jordan, from which the children of Israel had not yet crossed to subdue the Canaanites, &c. being now conquered, it appears that the tribe of Gad and Reuben, and as we must suppose, the half tribe of Manasseh, who was the son of Joseph, though this last particular is not absolutely mentioned, conceived a liking to the country, and desired that Moses would permit their settling in the land already conquered.

To this suit, their leader answered, saying :
" Shall your brethren go to war, and you sit
" here ? And why discourage ye their hearts,
" from going over Jordan, to possess the coun-

O 6

" try

“ try which the Lord hath given them? Such
“ was the conduct of your fathers, when I
“ sent them to obtain a knowledge of the land,
“ before they had effected any conquest upon
“ this side Jordan; for, returning, they dis-
“ couraged Israel from attempting to subdue
“ it, so that the Almighty's wrath was kindled,
“ and he sware, that none of those who had
“ come out of Egypt, from the age of twenty
“ years and upwards, should enjoy the land he
“ had designed for their inheritance, excepting
“ Joshua and Caleb, who obeyed his will.
“ And furthermore, he made them wander in
“ the desert 40 years, till all the generation
“ that had thus committed evil in his sight
“ was done away. And yet are ye now risen
“ in your father's stead, a race of sinful men,
“ to aggravate God's wrath against you.”

Moses having said thus much, the tribes pe-
titioning to have their portion, said, they only
wished to gain a resting place for the reception
of their little ones and cattle, and that, there-
fore, they would still accompany their brethren
over Jordan, and fight with them, till their
several inheritances were made certain, and that
then, and not till then, they would return, to
dwell in peace and safety.

Upon this condition, Moses gave them all
the

the country which had lately appertained to Og and Sihon, namely, all between the River Arnon and Mount Hermon ; so that their possessions lay upon that side of Jordan which the Jewish people had not quitted then : however, in pursuance of their promise, they went over with the other tribes, and aided them in all their wars, till they had totally subdued the Canaanites, and got possession of the whole extensive Promised Land.

XCVI.

DEUT. xxvii. to xxxi.

THE FINAL ACTS OF MOSES.

BEFORE CHRIST 1451.

THE time for the passage of the children of Israel over Jordan being now at hand, and Moses knowing he was not to cross it, ordered that, in going over, they should set them up great stones, and write the ten commandments on them, with the forms of blessing, on Mount Gerizim, and those of cursing, on Mount Ebal. He exhorted them to keep the law of God, by giving them to understand

the

the benefits that would ensue thereon, together with the miseries that would attend their disobedience ; adding at the close, a promise, notwithstanding of forgiveness, if at any time when they had broken it, they should repent. With this, the legislator told them, that the Almighty had thus publicly, in form, declared his will, that none hereafter sinning, should alledge the plea of ignorance.

And having written down this law, he gave it to the priests, that they might lay it safely up within the ark ; and having afterwards composed his song of praise to God, gave orders that the people should be made to learn it.

XCVII.

DEUT. xxxii.

MOSES' SONG.

HEARKEN ye heavens, and I will speak ;
 draw near
 Ye that possess earth's climes ; stand still and hear ;
 For thro' my lips the sacred strains that pass,
 Soft as those showers that cheer the russet grafts,
 When the noon sun prevails with sultry sway,
 Peace and repose shall to each heart convey,
 While to the heav'ns above, and earth below,
 Fix'd on the strain, God's wond'rous love I show :
 You

You therefore, too, while grateful I record,
Nature's great power, the universal Lord,
Join in the song, and your accordant lays
Mingle with mine, to celebrate his praise.

Ascribe ye to God's name the grandeur due ;
Glorious he is, our shield and fortress too.
Justice and truth, those attributes divine,
Fast by his seat above conspicuous shine.
But of mankind, wherever they find place,
Crimes of each die pollute the numerous race.
Deep in their forehead trac'd, the mark they
bear

Is not the child's, nor yet heaven-printed there ;
But from vile fathers sprung, that knew not God,
They the same path pursue those fathers trod.

And is it thus, oh void of sense and thought !
After such wonders in your favour wrought,
God you requite ? What, save his mighty hand,
Snatch'd you from bondage in proud Pharoah's
land,

Safe brought you hither, thro' wide wastes un-
known,

And this fair-spreading region made your own ?
Past times recall to mind, the days of yore,
Years, when those flourish'd, that are now no
more.

Ask such as gave you birth, and let *them* tell,
They, whose hoar years know things long past
so well.

When

When to the nations God their lot assigned,
Israel and Israel's sons he bore in mind :
In the parch'd wilderness, where all around
Famine prevail'd, their scatter'd tribes he found ;
Screen'd through his care, and led as by the hand,
He their sure progres mark'd to this blefs'd land :
Taught them his statutes ; and, as men delight,
Safe from all harm, to guard their sense of fight,
So too was God their aid, at all times nigh,
Dear they to him, on whom they might rely, }
As to themselves, the ball of their own eye. }

Tir'd with their way, distress'd and feeble
grown,
They to God's ear their wants by prayer made
known.

In the wide waste, a barren tract around,
Forty long years no food or drink they found :
But their faint frame his wond'rous power sup-
ply'd.

Honey at times flow'd down the rock's hard side ;
Wheat of the finest sort, their hearts to cheer,
Sprung a spontaneous crop from year to year ;
And the rich purple that from grapes distill'd,
(Grapes not by them first set) their vessels fill'd.

But in life's storms, when shock succeeded
shock,
Of their salvation they despis'd the rock ;
Left his safe side, and at their fancy stray'd,
When to the host of hell, not him they pray'd.

God,

God, therefore, when with outrages so vile,
He, his once lov'd, beheld their hearts defile,
Left them, as they had him, “ For sure no land
“ So much,” said he, “ provokes my red right
“ hand.

“ My anger they stir up, by homage shown
“ To such as are no gods, brass, wood, and
“ stone ;
“ Therefore, not heeding their affliction's cry,
“ By such as are no people, I even I
“ Will desolate their tribes. The burning sun
“ And famine shall make waste those tribes
“ among :
“ Fear and the sword, these joining, shall lay
“ low
“ The virgin whose flush'd cheeks with beauty
“ glow ;
“ The suckling, its life's course scarce well
“ begun,
“ And the hoar man of age, his not quite run.
“ This desolation too, with horror fraught,
“ Long since upon their heads would I have
“ brought,
“ But that I knew how loudly the vain foe
“ Rising in fame, o'er them brought down to
“ woe,
“ Would have express'd their vaunts ; and their
“ own strength

“ Prais'd,

“ Prais’d, when they saw my people crush’d at
“ length.
“ Oh that by this, then, taught, and ren-
“ dered wise,
“ Israel would their true int’rest duly prize !
“ Of wisdom, the great depths would compre-
“ hend !
“ And seriously revolve their latter end !
“ One, a whole host should then have put to
“ flight ;
“ For their defence was not the heathen’s might.
“ Vengeance and recompence alike belong
“ Both to my state ; for I am good and strong.
“ This then let my once cherish’d keep in
“ mind,
“ And from the thought sure consolation find ;
“ Since if my justice visit them with pain,
“ Soon shall my mercy take its turn to reign,
“ When I behold them suffering, hear them
“ groan,
“ And when convinc’d that every aid is flown,
“ Down in the dust a helpless band they fall,
“ And on that mercy for compassion call.
“ For from eternity has been my reign,
“ With empire o’er heav’n, hell, earth, air, and
“ main.
“ My vengeance round the world, and love, I
“ deal ;
“ I kill, and I preserve ; I wound and heal ;
“ I lift

“ I lift up my right hand, and say I live
“ For ever ; to all creatures life I give :
“ But if my sword I whet, and once proceed
“ To judgment, I am dreadful then indeed.”

Such is our God : with one consenting voice,
Laud him ye tribes, and in his name rejoice :
Join too the nations in your grateful praise ;
For though most just, yet merciful are all his
ways.

XCVIII.

DEUT. xxxii. xxxiii. xxxiv.

THE DEATH OF MOSES.

BEFORE CHRIST 1451.

THE time when Moses should be gathered to his people being now arrived, he was commanded to ascend the Mount, called Abarim. He paid obedience, but before he left the congregation, blessed the several tribes, by way of prophecy, excepting that of Simeon ; for omitting which, however, Moses has assigned no cause. This blessing being uttered, he went up the Mountain. Being there, the Lord addressed him in the following manner : “ All
“ the

“ the land thou seest before thee, did I swear
 “ I would bestow on Abraham, Isaac, and on
 “ Jacob, saying, I would give it to their seed.
 “ I have permitted thee to view it, but thou
 “ shalt not set thy foot thereon, because both
 “ thou and Aaron sinned against me at the
 “ waters of Meribah.” So God’s servant Moses
 yielded up the ghost, and the Almighty buried
 him ; but no one knew the place.*

* With this transaction, ends the Pentateuch, or five succeeding books of Moses, that contain the history of 2552 years, from the beginning of the world. Next after Deuteronomy follows the book of Joshua, which commences with the 41st year after the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt.

XCIX.

JOSHUA i.

THE COMMENCEMENT OF JOSHUA’S
MINISTRY.

BEFORE CHRIST 1451.

ATTER the death of Moses, Joshua, whom the Almighty had before ordained as his successor, was appointed and confirmed to be the leader of his people. He encouraged him to enter on his ministry with courage ; shewing him

him the borders of the land he was to give the Hebrews, with a promise of assistance, in each enterprize he undertook for their adyantage. Having thus received commandment, Joshua bade the people under him, prepare, in three days time, to cross the river Jordan, so that they might gain possession of the Promised Land, and put the tribes of Gad and Reuben, and Manasseh, in remembrance of the promise they had pledged, to aid their countrymen, before they thought of settling in the country, on that side of Jordan, where they still remained. Their promise they renewed on this occasion ; and, as Joshua meant so soon to lead the people over Jordan, he conceived it necessary to obtain some knowledge of the land beyond it ; for which purpose, he dispatched two spies, who were to cross the River, and get into Jericho as secretly as they were able, whence they should return directly, having made whatever observation so much haste would let them.

C.

JOSHUA ii.

THE HEBREW SPIES PRESERVED BY
RAHAB.

BEFORE CHRIST 1451.

SCENE. *A Chamber.*

TWO SPIES.

FIRST SPY.

IN truth, dear partner, I approve not of this running into danger for the sake of others.

Second Spy. No! And yet can any thing be fairer? Was there any murmur in the camp, when Joshua said, "Remember Moses' late commandment, namely: as the Lord your God has given a part of you *that* rest he promised them on this side Jordan, you shall leave your wives, your children, and your cattle, in the land where they are settled, and go over Jordan, so that you may help your brethren in obtaining them that rest they too are promised; when, and not till then, you shall come back, and fix in your possession."

I am

I am situated like yourself. My tribe have gained their rest, and yet you see I have not thought it hard to undergo the chance of battle for my brethren's sake ; and not that only, but to venture forth upon this enterprize of hazard, that by any means intelligence may be obtained concerning Jericho, which Joshua, who is now the leader of God's people, has received commandment to attack.

First Spy. God grant, however, that at least, arriving in the city, no one have suspicion of our character. The office of a spy, which we have undertaken, will be followed with immediate death if they discover us.

Second Spy. No doubt, dear brother, we are safe.

First Spy. Yes ; we are lodged indeed : but do you know within whose habitation we have houed ourselves till morning ?

Second Spy. We have houed ourselves, I know, within a harlot's habitation ; but what matters that ? For we are safe as long as we can keep our character concealed ; and so to keep it, is a matter that depends entirely on ourselves. If that were to be known, we should be no where safe. Be therefore of good courage, brother : we have made our observations ; and to-morrow, when the day first breaks upon us,

us, will be up, and instantly away. Fear nothing ; Joshua will reward our zeal and courage, I am sure, when we return.

First Spy. Peace, peace ; here is our hostess. What can be the reason of her coming unexpectedly upon us as she does ?

Rabab (*entering*). Alas ! alas ! What sort of men have I received into my house ! The king hath sent his messengers, affirming there came hither spies, this evening, who were sent to search our city ; and these messengers are ordered to find out, and seize them in my habitation. If then ye be such, advise what you will do.

Second Spy (aside). Unfortunate discovery !

First Spy (aside). We are lost !

Rabab. The king, I can discern, has not been misinformed : however, fear not me, I will effect your safety. You have now no time to lose. Go quickly higher up, and hide yourselves upon the roof, beneath the flax-stalks you will see when you get there, Quick, quick ; or your pursuers will discover you. I hear them coming ; but will save you if I can. Really upon my friendship. Tarry not. *That* way the stairs are. From the roof you may discern if they depart. Provided I can send them off, come down again ; and in the mean time, hope

I shall

I shall succeed, as I myself have hope I shall. Stay not to answer, but away. (*After they are gone*), I have a reason for the part I act; and now let me resolve what answer I shall give the messengers, for they are at the door.—I have it.

To the MESSENGERS (coming in).

You do but lose your time, good friends, in seeking out these spies within my house. There came indeed two men, as I designed to tell you; but I know not whence they were; and just before the time of shutting up the gates at evening, they went out; but whither they are fled I cannot possibly conjecture. Granting they are what you tell me, whither can they go? You must inevitably overtake them if you haste that way, and instantly set forward. Trust me, I am not so far at variance with my country as to hide two men who would betray it.

First Messenger. Come, we can believe you, and will go towards Jordan to the fords. They must have gone that way: so follow.

Rahab (after they are gone). I am happy in this riddance. They are gone; and my two guests will instantly descend. It was a lucky circumstance they chose my house to lodge in. I shall have a claim upon their gratitude when they invade the city; and of course be safe if

they have any recollection of the benefit which, through my means, they have received already. They are coming down, I hear them. (*To the two Spies coming in*). Enter, and without a fear. I have persuaded the two messengers, and they are hurried on to overtake you at the fords of Jordan; for that way, I told them, you were bound.

First Spy. What shall we do for you?

Second Spy. How show our gratitude?

Rahab. Hear me, good friends. That I have saved your lives is true; and I am happy in the thought of having done so: neither is that all; for I am happy, likewise, that you came into my house to get a lodging. We all know that God hath given you up our land; and therefore has the terror of your countrymen laid hold upon us. Swear then to me, that, in gratitude for this day's kindness shown you by my hand, you too will show me kindness, and do mine whatever good you can.

Second Spy. Our life for yours, if you betray us not while yet we stay among you. And when God hath made us masters of your city, and the country round about, according to his promise, we will show you kindness.

First Spy. And preserve both you and yours, in the destruction of the place.

Rahab.

Rahab. I ask no more; and to effect your future safety, will, as soon as your pursuers are got farther, gently let you down together by a cord, tied fast to yon side-window, which you see, that overlooks the country; for my house is built upon the city wall, as you have very probably remarked.

First Spy. We have so; upon which account we chose it for our lodging, that in case of a discovery, we might have some out-let for escaping.

Rahab. It was well you had that thought, both for yourselves and me too. After I have let you down, escape as speedily as you are able, to the mountain, lest the two pursuers, just now here, should light upon you. To prevent their search, stay full three days at least in your concealment, and then go your way.

Second Spy. We will do so; and you shall find we mean to keep the promise we have made you.

First Spy. But how, pray, are we to recollect your dwelling-place again, when with our brethren we return?

Second Spy. Well thought of!

Rahab. Let me manage that. Behold! I will not take away the cord by which, as we have settled matters, you are to descend.

First Spy. We understand. Remember, therefore, you, on your side, to bring hither every one you would preserve when first you hear of our approach, and you shall find we are your friends.

Rahab. According to your words so be it. Come then, it is time you were away; or you may not get back in safety to the mountain e'er day dawn. Come with me: I will fix the cord, and you may easily descend.

First Spy. We follow you: go on before us.

CI. CII. CIII.

JOSHUA iii. to vi.

THE PASSAGE OVER JORDAN, CIR- CUMCISION RE-ORDAINED, AND JERICHO DESTROYED.

BEFORE CHRIST 1451.

JOSHUA being told, on the arrival of the Spies, how things were situated; and encouraged likewise by the Almighty to go forward, went from Shittim, at which place the Israelites were posted, to the banks of Jordan, where he halted and encamped. Upon the morrow

morrow, being taught before of God, he crossed the River, which divided, to afford him a safe passage, as the Red Sea formerly had done.

For a memorial of this wonderful event, the Hebrews, by command of Joshua, set up twelve large stones, or pillars, in the very channel of the River Jordan ; and then taking up twelve other stones, from those they found upon the spot, where they had reared the former, set them up at Gilgal ; at which place they first encamped when they were come to land.

The River being thus gone over, God enjoined the Hebrews to renew the rite of circumcision ; which, since first the people quitted Egypt, had been discontinued ; and exactly at this time, or rather on the morrow, after they had celebrated their first passover in Canaan, which was done immediately on their arrival in it, manna ceased ; for having now attained a cultivated country, they were able to procure supplies of corn. By this time, Joshua being drawn near Jericho, our Lord (that is to say, Jesus Christ), in a dream, approached, and stood before him ; whereupon not knowing what the vision meant, he asked, if he appeared for Israel or the enemy. " Nay," said the vision, " but as captain of my Father's armies " am I come ;" and thereupon encouraged

P 3 him,

him, by promising he would defend his people. Jericho, soon after, was invested, and as God had ordered should be done, the ark was seven times carried round it by the priests (once daily), with the sound of horns and trumpets; so that when the seventh procession was complete, its walls fell down before the Hebrews, who together rushing to the ruins, utterly destroyed both men and women, young and old, ox, sheep, and ass; for so had the Almighty ordered should be done. In short, no living thing was spared, except the harlot Rahab, and her father's household, as the Spies had promised they should be.

CIV.

JOSHUA vii.

THE SACRILEGE OF ACHAN
PUNISHED.

BEFORE CHRIST 1451.

SCENE. *A Tent.*

ELIEZER.

THE Lord is angry with his people: they went up to Ai, being confident of prospering, as at Jericho, and vanquishing the country

country as it lay before them ; but instead of conquest, have been shamefully defeated. Now what tidings, son ?

Phinehas (entering). Alas, my lord ! all is confusion ; and a panic has gone through the camp ! Of those we sent to Ai, six and thirty fell at the first onset ; and the rest, affrighted, fled away. Even now, the Aites are pursuing them to Shebarim ; and none of all their number, have the heart to turn about, and face their followers.—What is to be done ?

Eliezer. I know not : for some crime committed by the people, is this change of fortune brought upon us.—Where is Joshua ?

Phinehas. In his tent.—No ; here he comes.

Joshua (entering). The Lord has told me the occasion of this great calamity at Ai. I fell down before him in the tent, and heard his voice, as follows : “ Israel have again been sinning, and transgressed my covenant, which I commanded them ; for they have secretly conveyed away a portion of the spoil at Jericho, and hid it with their stuff. On this account have they been thus defeated ; neither will I any longer be their God, unless they put away the man who hath committed the abominable crime. Up therefore, Joshua, and bring every one to the decision of the

“ lot ; and him that shall prove guilty, do thou stone, and afterward consume with fire, his wife, his little ones, and every thing he hath.”—This is the Lord’s commandment : see it therefore done, good Phinehas ; and let instantly the lot be drawn.

Phinehas. I will, my lord.

Joshua. And as you make discovery, send me word ; for I am anxious to know every thing. I will wait here, with Eliezer, to receive your Messenger.—(*After Phinehas is gone**) *What will become of Israel ! Would to God we had been satisfied, and not come over Jordan to encounter this defeat.*

Eliezer. The Canaanites will hear of our discomfiture, and hasten to surround us, if we cannot, on the spot, appease God’s justice, by discovering who, among our people, is the criminal, and punishing his sin.

Joshua. It was a sin in those who had the ordering of the spoil at Jericho, that they attended not to God’s commandment : had they done their duty, this calamity would not have happened to us.

Eliezer. It is now too late to be prevented : but here comes a Messenger from Phinehas. He will tell us something.

Joshua (to a Messenger coming in). Well, what say you ?

The Messenger.

The Messenger. Phinehas has proposed the lot, my lord ; and it has fallen upon the tribe of Judah.

Joshua. On the tribe of Judah ! Back, for further tidings, and return with all the speed you can.

Messenger. Here comes another Messenger.

Joshua (to the second Messenger coming in). Well, what say you ?

Second Messenger. The lot has been proposed a second time, and fallen upon the families of Zera.

Joshua. Get you back again ; that if there be more tidings, you may bring it us. If you should meet another on your way, bid him make haste.

Second Messenger. Here comes another Messenger already.

Joshua (to the third Messenger coming in). Well ?

Third Messenger. The lot has been proposed a third time, and now fallen upon the house of Zabdi.

Joshua. God assist us in this search ; and see, here comes a fourth. Now will the guilty person be discovered.

Fourth Messenger (coming in). For the last time has the lot been thrown, and it is fallen

on Achan. He has been the cause of all this grief to Israel.

Joshua. Achan!

Eliezer. And can he have been concerned in any wickedness?

Joshua. Is he secured?

Fourth Messenger. He is my lord; and lo! they are already bringing him.

Joshua. Yes, yes; I see the criminal. Now will the Almighty be again at peace with Israel. —(*To Achan, who is here brought in.*) Achan, notwithstanding the great sin you must have done, add not an obdurate impenitence thereto; but frankly make confession, and inform us what you have committed, in itself so grievous, that the Lord should thus be angry with his people.

Achan. I have sinned indeed against the God of Israel, whose displeasure is too visible in the detection of my guilt. When I beheld, among the spoils of Jericho, a goodly Babylonish garment, with much gold and silver, I purloined the treasure and concealed it under ground, at midnight, in my tent.

Joshua. In this confession you do well; and it is God that punishes the wickedness you have committed. It has troubled Israel as you know; for which the Lord will trouble you,

you, and not you only, but your wife and little ones.

Achan. Oh Heaven! my wife and little ones!

Joshua. There is no remedy. It is the Lord's good will; and we are only to perform it. Take him therefore hence, and put together in one place, his wife, his sons, his daughter, oxen, sheep, and asses, with himself, and stone them till they die. They are accursed before the Lord; and this is his commandment. After which prepare a fire to burn them, with the tent their family abode in, and whatever else they had. Away and see it done. Let him not speak; and when this dreadful punishment is over, let the place for ever after be called Achor, that is *trouble*; for your souls this day are full of trouble. Go, and let us hence to prayer.

THE CRAFT OF THE GIBEONITES.

BEFORE CHRIST 1451.

ACHAN being punished, God was reconciled to Israel as before, and Ai taken. Every soul therein, the Hebrews put to death, as well as those of all the nations round about them, which the Almighty had commanded should be done, the idolatry, and other sins they had committed having been so great.

This treatment of the Aites, and of those who had before been conquered and extirpated, alarmed the Hittites, and those others whom the Israelites were to expel, and take possession of their land ; in consequence whereof, they joined together, and prepared for war with Joshua ; being all of one accord in what so nearly interested them, except four cities of the Hivites, Gibeon being one. These thought they should be happy could they only save their lives ; accordingly they plotted, going craftily to work ; and the inhabitants of Gibeon were to manage the negotiation. In pursuance of this

this scheme, says Joshua, some among them made as if they were ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, with old mended *bottles, tattered raiment on their backs, old clouted shoes, and mouldy victuals. Being thus equipped, they came to Joshua, at the place already spoken of, called Gilgal, where the Israelites were still encamped, and being brought into his tent, informed him they were come in that condition from a very distant country. "Seeing then," said they to Joshua, "we are here upon a business dictated by friendship, which is really our errand, let us make a league, a contract or agreement with each other. You, in Israel's name, and we in favour of the city we inhabit and three others, tributary to it."

Joshua. But perhaps you dwell among us; and in that case, how shall we conclude a league of friendship with you?

A Gibeonite. No, we are indeed your servants, but yet strangers in this country.

Joshua. But who are you? and whence is it you come hither?

The Gibeonite. As already we have mentioned, from a very distant land; for we have

* These were likely made of leather, which when rent, may easily be mended.

heard

314 THE CRAFT OF THE GIBEONITES.

heard of you and the Almighty, with the wonders he has done for your advantage in the land of Egypt: how he brought you out, sustained you in the wilderness, and strengthened you to overcome king Sihon, and the king of Bashan.

Another Gibeonite. Wherefore, in a meeting of our Elders, we were ordered to get victuals ready, and set out upon our journey, so that we might visit you as soon as we were able, here in Gilgal, and conclude a treaty with you.

Third Gibeonite. This our bread when we left home was hot: and now behold it dry and mouldy: and these bottles, which we filled with wine were new; whereas see now what they are come to. Look, we pray you likewise, at our shoes and raiment, which, by reason of the journey we have made, are grown quite old.

Joshua. Enough, you are good men, I see; and in the name of Israel will I make this league of friendship with you.

First Gibeonite. And our three dependant cities?

Joshua. And your three dependant cities.

Second Gibeonite. Swear then to observe it.

Joshua. By the God of Israel do I swear I will observe it.

Third Gibeonite. We have prospered, and have

have now no further need for such concealment (*dropping their upper garments*). Therefore do we thank you, Leader of the Israelitish people.

Joshua. How?

First Gibeonite. We come not from a distant country, as we said we did; but are of Gibeon, here, in Canaan. We have saved our lives, which was the only thing we wanted.

Joshua. Is it possible! you are of Gibeon, of a city whose inhabitants we were commanded to extirpate. You have saved your lives indeed; since now a covenant exists between us; but look to it; for by reason of this fraudulent contrivance to obtain your wishes, you are cursed, and shall be doomed to slavery. Hewers shall ye be of wood, and water drawers to God's people while ye live.

First Gibeonite. We care not, it was told us God would give your armies to possess our land, and utterly destroy us; therefore to preserve our lives have we done thus. Farewell.

Joshua. Go, miserable hirelings as you are; and if to live in slavery can make you happy—be so.

CVI. CVII.

JOSHUA x. to xxiv.

THE RESCUE OF GIBEON, AND THE PEACEABLE ESTABLISHMENT, THROUGHOUT ALL CANAAN, OF THE JEWS.

THE peace, established by the Gibeonites between the Hebrews and themselves, no sooner was made known, than it appears five kings combined to seize on Gibeon. Joshua, as by treaty he was bound to do, went up that he might rescue it, and prospered, God assisting him, by whose command he bade the sun and moon stand still, that Israel might have time to overcome and put to death the fugitives, of whom not one escaped. This rescue of the Gibeonites is mentioned in the 10th of Joshua; after which ensues a six years history of Joshua's wars with various kings, whom he entirely vanquished, slaying all their subjects; after which, the whole of Canaan being then in his possession, he divided it among the Israelites, except the tribe of Levi, which was all made up of priests, sent home the tribes that had before

fore obtained their settlement upon the other side of Jordan, but had crossed it, as already mentioned, to assist their brethren, and soon after died, five score and ten years old, about one thousand four hundred and forty-three years before the birth of Christ. And this last mentioned circumstance, with those that follow, of less moment, occupy the whole remaining part of Joshua, that is to say, the fourteen final chapters.

Those less momentary circumstances are :

1. The rise of what are called the sabbatical years, from the autumn of the fourteen hundred and fiftieth year before Christ, in which the Jews began to till the ground, upon the failure of their manna.
2. The celebration of the first sabbatical year, or year of rest, six years after the commencement of tillage among the Jews, 1444 before Christ, when Joshua had extirpated those giants called the Anakims, and got possession of the hilly country, and its cities, Hebron, Debir, Anab, and in general of the mountains both of Judah and all Israel. In commemoration of this rest afforded them by God, they were to hold a Jubilee, in future, every 50 years.

3. Their setting up the tabernacle, at a place called

called Shiloh, thought to be the same with Salem, where it stood three hundred years and more.

CVIII.

JUDGES ii. iii. iv.

THE FREQUENT SINS OF ISRAEL, WITH THEIR RESCUE FROM THREE SEVERAL SERVITUDES.

BEFORE CHRIST BETWEEN 1413 AND 1285.

AFTER the decease of Joshua, and the elders who outlived him, and remembered all the miracles which God had wrought for Israel, there ensued a race of men who knew him not, that is to say, would not reflect on his commandments, to obey them; but perversely mingled with the Canaanites in marriage, and adored their gods. In this sad time of anarchy, when every one did that which he considered proper, all those crimes were perpetrated

petrated, that are mentioned in the *five last chapters of the book of Judges; the events of which are all misplaced in point of time, as any one may see who looks into the larger bibles,

* What is mentioned in these five last chapters, seems, in no degree, connected with the parts that come before or after. It will, therefore, be sufficient if we give a summary of those five chapters, which is briefly thus :

A man, inhabiting Mount Ephraim, and whose name was Micah, robbed his mother's house, but being afterwards affected with the guilt of such a deed, restored the money. All this money she employed in purchasing a set of images, to serve as household gods. For these, her son made ornaments, and hired a Levite, to officiate in his mother's house, by way of priest. About this time, a portion of the tribe of Dan, who had not, with the rest, obtained a settlement, were seeking one, and came to Micah's dwelling. Of the Levite they enquired what probability there was that they should prosper in their search. He gave them hopes, and they repaired to Laish, with six hundred men, first robbing Micah and his mother of their idols, and prevailing on the Levite to go with them. Laish they surprized, and took possession of it, where they instituted or established a new species of idolatry, and made the Levite their high priest; which office he, together with his sons, continued in, till the inhabitants, established thus at Laish, were made captives.

After this begins another story, which is worded thus : A certain Levite had a concubine who left him, and took refuge at her father's house, in Bethlehem of Judah. He went after her, and she consented to return with him; but coming back through Gibeah, the inhabitants so grievously abused the woman as to kill her. Upon this, the Levite cut her out into

bibles, where the dates are entered in the margin. The Almighty being utterly incensed at such transactions, gave his people up into the hands of Cushan, king of Mesopotamia; which first calamity of theirs continued but eight years, and terminated fourteen hundred and five years before Christ: For Othniel, son of Kenar, and the son-in-law of Joshua, being,

twelve equal parts, and sent a part to every tribe, that he might move them to revenge the cruelty. They were disposed to do so, and sent messengers, requiring that the tribe of Benjamin should give them up those men of Gibeah, which had done the crime. But they refused, on which two fights ensued between them, and the rest of Israel, and these last lost forty thousand men; but afterwards, by stratagem, killed all the Benjamites, except six hundred. They repented soon, however, of their violence; and were determined to befriend the Benjamites, as much as possible, but they had sworn before hand, at a meeting of the tribes, that none among them should consent to have his daughter wed a Benjamite. They, recollecting this, bethought themselves that the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead had refused their presence at the meeting, where this oath was made. To Jabesh Gilead, therefore, they sent men, to punish first this contumacy, and supply the Benjamites with women. In pursuance of this scheme, they took the place, and utterly destroyed the inhabitants, except four hundred virgins, who were, notwithstanding, insufficient for the purpose they had then in view. Thus frustrated in their designs, they were advised to visit Shiloh, where a feast, in honour of the Lord, was held each year. They did so, and seized every man a wife of those that danced in the assembly; and thus ends the substance of the five last chapters of the book of Judges.

near

near about this time, stirred up by the Almighty as a judge or ruler, and avenger of his people, conquered Cushan, and entirely freed the Israelites from bondage, which deliverance was their first.

For forty years succeeding this, the land had rest; but Othniel dying not long after the completion of this period, Israel fell again into the way of their first sins, and angered the Almighty, so that he surrendered them into the hands of Eglon, king of Moab, who, combining with the Amalekites and Ammonites, recovered Jericho, and brought the Hebrews back into a state of bondage, which began in the thirteen hundred and forty-third year before Christ, and lasted eighteen years.

But when these eighteen years were ended, Ehud, son of Gera, was raised up by God, as an avenger of his people; for, pretending he had something of a message for king Eglon, he obtained admission, and then ran him through the body. Then, escaping, he collected Israel on Mount Ephraim, and destroyed ten thousand valiant men of Moab, which confirmed his countrymen's deliverance for the second time.

This deliverance was of forty years continuance; during all which time, the land had rest: but after this, the people sunk again into their

their former sin, and were subjected to the Philistines. Of these, and, while the ruler Ehud was still living, Shamgar, son of Anath, slew six hundred, and that likewise, with no other weapon than a goad, in use among such people as drive oxen ; and this Shamgar too avenged the Hebrews, whose deliverance (thirteen hundred and twenty-five years before our Saviour), was the third they happily experienced : but when Ehud was deceased, the Israelites, returning to their former ways, were given up again, by God, into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, and this thralldom, which began twenty years after the last mentioned period, lasted just as many years.*

* The fourth deliverance of Israel might come next ; but we shall here insert the book of Ruth, because the events, related in it, happened near about the period we are come to, viz. 1312 years before Christ.

CIX. CX.

RUTH. ii.

THE PIETY OF RUTH, AND ITS
REWARD.

SCENE. *Corn fields, with reapers at a distance.*
RUTH and NAOMI.

THIS way, dear daughter ; and glean here,
where no one for some time will interrupt
you.

Ruth. Is the master of the reapers here ?
Naomi. Not yet, dear Ruth : Though when
you see him with his men, fear nothing ; but
believe I have my reasons for directing you to
come this morning gleaning here. At present,
therefore, ask no questions, but comply with
my desires.

Ruth. If he should see me and ask any thing,
shall I make answer " I am daughter to Naomi,
" late of Moab ? "

Naomi. Would to God I had a name more
suited to my dismal fortune ! *Mara* would be-
come

come me better : for, dear daughter, hath not God dealt very bitterly with me and those belonging to me ?

Ruth. But why weep, beloved mother ? Recollect, you promised you would check your tears in future.

Naomi. And I will. It is a debt I owe your goodness. When Elimelech, my husband, and my sons were living, and our residence in Bethlehem of Judah, to which country we returned ; and even afterward, when we removed to Moab, little did I think we should be sunk to such distress, that any one belonging to me would be forced in this wise to turn gleaner : but when God was pleased to take them to himself, then, by experience, I was taught the value of a husband ; for with him went all my household comforts ; and instead thereof, I need not tell you, poverty obtained possession of my dwelling. In that situation, Orpah, who had married, as you know, my younger son, was easily persuaded to forsake me. Can I blame her ? but if she be blameless, what is not your praise, dear Ruth, that would not quit me in my adverse fortunes, but chose rather to turn gleaner, than enjoy the happier situation a kind mother, in your native country, might have easily provided you, though poor, yet not so poor as I am.

Ruth.

Ruth. Tell me not, dear mother, of the praise I merit, I have only done my duty. In your happier days you cherished me; and when adversity succeeded to that plenty I partook of, could I leave you? No, I could not, and deserve that name of daughter, which not many years preceding, your affection had bestowed upon me. If then, when my sister Orpah left your falling fortunes, and you said, "Go after " her dear Ruth, and let me not involve you " in my poverty:"—If then I wept, and said, " Advise me not to leave you; for wherever you " shall go, there will I follow you; wherever " you shall fix your habitation, I will fix my " dwelling likewise, and your people shall be " mine; wherever you may die, there will I " die, and have my grave."—If, dearest mother, I shed tears, and spoke in this wise, it was truly from my heart, and now, that you are come again to Bethlehem, although you have not told me your intention in so doing, otherwise than that you mean to part with your inheritance, which certainly is not of consequence sufficient in itself, that you should therefore have performed so long a journey, you shall see with what unwearied labour and affection I will keep you, if I can, in your old age.

Naomi. Dear child, God give you of his choicest blessings in return for so much love; and may he likewise render me a grateful mother: but I see the Reapers coming, now, this way; and therefore I will leave you instantly. When you have gleaned as much as you think fit, come home, where I shall wait for your return with much impatience. Wish not to enquire what reason I can have for doing as I do; but let me have my way. Adieu, dear Ruth.

Ruth. Adieu, dear mother, I shall think it long till I return, that you may have my gleanings. (*Naomi goes out.*)

Ruth. What can be her meaning, that at this time, rather than another, I should come a gleaning, and in this field likewise, rather than in those about it, where methinks I could get more. No matter; I will glean in this, and though I may not pick up quite as much, what difference will it make, since I can come again to-morrow? But the Reapers are approaching. I was never out before on such a business, and may possibly do wrong without a bad intention, I will therefore ask permission. (*To a Reaper*), my good friend, pray let me glean among the sheaves.

The Reaper. Glean, glean, and welcome too, fair maid: but pray whose damsel are you?

Ruth.

Ruth. One Naomi's. She is poor, and lately come from Moab. There is no one but myself to get a morsel for her. Therefore am I now come out a gleaning, if you will but give me leave.

The Reaper. Fear nothing, but go round about, and pick wherever you think proper.

Ruth (while gleaning, to herself). Yonder comes the master of the field, no doubt. He looks as if he were.

Boaz (entering). The Lord be with you friends.

The Reaper. And you too, worthy master.

Boaz. You are all quite well, I hope, and no one absent. But what maid is that behind you?

The Reaper. One Naomi's. She is lately come from Moab, being very poor.

Boaz. Naomi, and from Moab! She was formerly of Bethlehem. I know the woman, and have heard too of her daughter. Call her hither.—(*Aside, while the Reaper goes to fetch her.*) Such a modest maiden scarcely ever did I see. (*To Ruth, advancing.*) Good morrow daughter, go not hence till you have gleaned enough; nor glean in any other field, but tarry here; and mix among my maidens. Let your eye be likewise on the field which now my husbandmen are reaping, and go, after them.

You too, young men, if you would merit my good will, respect her. Fear them not, fair maid, they will not hurt you ; so that when you happen to be thirsty, you may freely go, and drink of what they have provided in the vessels yonder.

Ruth. Blessed be the Lord, that though a stranger, I have found this favour in your sight.

Boaz. Go to. I have been told of every thing your charity and daughter-like affection have been doing these three years for Naomi, though not your real mother : I have learned too, with what gratitude you did not scruple, for her sake, to leave your parents, and come with her to a people where you had no friend. God recompense your work, and give you that protection your good heart deserves.

Ruth. Where am I ? and what am I, that the God of Naomi vouchsafes me all this goodness in the sight of such a wealthy man ? Let me, my lord, not only have but merit likewise your regard ; for surely you have comforted my heart, in speaking as you have, so friendly to me, though I be not of the number of your handmaids. How rejoiced my poor dear mother's heart will be, when I inform her of all this !

Boaz. Is she so very poor ?

Ruth. Quite destitute, my lord : and wou'd have perished

perished were it not for me, though I am likewise poor myself ; but I have strength to labour for her. She was once, though not so rich as you, yet certainly as happy. We then lived in Moab ; but her husband and two sons were taken from her, and soon after she began to be in want. While she had plenty, I had plenty likewise. Could I, therefore, leave her in distress ? No, no ! God witness that I mean to work for her support, though we are now with strangers, in a land I never heard of till of late ; and whither she is come, though why I know not.

Boaz (aside). But I guess a little at it.

Ruth. This is the first time I ever came a gleaning. I am not accustomed to such work ; but shall, with pleasure, bear my fortune, if Naomi be the better for it.

Boaz. She is sure to be the better ; and *your* fortune too will be the better for it, since God's providence will bless such piety, and raise up friends in your behalf. In this, I speak from my own feelings ; for if you, a destitute young woman, do so much, what should not I do for the poor and needy, who am blessed with such abundance, though in this case other motives should persuade me : but of this, no more at present. God, I said, would raise up friends

in your behalf ; for I will be among the number of those friends, and strive to do you good. At meal time, therefore, fail not to come hither. And you, Reapers, let her glean, not merely where the sheaves *have* stood, but where they are now standing ; and reproach her not. Farewell. To-morrow, or whenever you think fit, be here again.—*You reapers this way with me.* In yon corner of the field I have to give you some directions.—(*Aside, while the Reapers are taking up their things, and Ruth continues gleaning.*) She is one among the number of my kinsfolk ; and on that account, though she were not of such a comely figure, should lay claim to my regard. I am not married, though my family is in the line of those,* through whom, great blessings have been promised to mankind ; descended as I am from Pharez, who was son to Judah, to that Judah from whose loins the Saviour of the world is, in process of time, to spring.—(*To the Reapers.*) Oh you are ready. Come then.

Ruth (alone). He is gone, and I am left at lei-

* Boaz was the son of Salmon. Salmon, that of Nasson. Nasson, of Aminidab. Aminidab, of Aram. Aram, of Esrom. Esrom, of Judah. Judah, of Jacob. Jacob, of Isaac ; and Isaac, of Abraham. See the five first verses of Matthew. And in Boaz' line was Jesus Christ to come into the world.

sure to reflect ; but is not this my mother coming here across the field ? It is indeed ! Yet what can bring her hither in so great a hurry ?

Naomi (entering). Oh my child, I have seen every thing. I was at first returning home, but thought soon afterward it would be better for me to remain. I did so, and stood watching just without the field, till Boaz, whom I saw approaching, should depart. I gazed as he stood talking with you, being quite impatient till he went away, and now am come to know what he has said. So tell me your whole conversation in the fewest words you can.

Ruth. Oh mother ! what a generous hearted man ! I have a world of happy tidings for you ; but the story is so long, I cannot tell it you.

Naomi. Then let us both go home together ; for I long to hear the whole. Come, dearest Ruth : the Reapers are all busy at their work, and will not heed us. Come ; but are you sure your news is of a welcome kind ?

Ruth. Yes, yes, dear mother.

Naomi. Come then, I am anxious to get home, and hear your story.

CXI.

RUTH iii. iv.

NAOMI'S PIOUS ARTIFICE.

NAOMI and RUTH.

NAOMI.

WELL, daughter; all night long have I been tossing on my bed, and could not sleep for thinking of you. Scarcely is the sun yet up, and you are, notwithstanding that, returned! So tell me quickly whether you have prospered.

Ruth. How could I do otherwise, with such a generous man! Oh mother! what a happiness, that we came hither! It was well however you forbore to tell me of your scheme, when I went out to glean. I should not, in that case, have brought myself to face the man, even had I been assured he would have viewed me with such favour.

Naomi. That I was aware of, dearest Ruth; and merely upon that account, kept silence; but I put this story off too long. So tell me every thing, how he received you at the door, and how he parted with you?

Ruth.

Ruth. The whole history is thus: when I had washed myself, I put my raiment on, and got me to the threshing floor, but did not plant myself in Boaz' way that night. I waited with the maidens till they rose from supper, and my lord lay down upon a heap of corn; then came I softly, and uncovering, as you bade me do, his feet, lay down myself; but so as not to touch him. How, dear mother, could I do even that?

Naomi. It is a custom here to do so.

Ruth. It was *that* encouraged me. We lay till near the hour of midnight; when behold he waked, and, turning, found another person lying on the corn besides him. He was somewhat startled, and cried out, "Who is it?" whereunto I answered boldly "I, my lord; "even Ruth, your handmaid. Spread your "skirt then over me, for are you not a kinsman?"

Naomi. And to this what said he?

Ruth. "Blessed," was his answer, "be you "of the Lord; for you have shewn more kindness at the end, than the beginning; inasmuch as you affected not the young. Fear "nothing, therefore, I will do whatever you "require; for all the city of my people know "you are a virtuous woman. It is like-

“ wise true that I am your near kinsman: there
“ is one, however, nearer than I am. Re-
“ main then here this night, and in the morn-
“ ing it shall be, that if that nearer kins-
“ man chuse to do his duty by you, let him do
“ it; but provided he refuse, I will myself
“ supply his place, and shew myself your kins-
“ man. Yes; I promise this as surely as the
“ God of Israel liveth. Lie down, therefore,
“ till the morning.”

Naomi. And with that you fell asleep?

Ruth. Yes mother, both; but neither of us
lay till, in the morning, it was light enough to
see each other. When we rose, “ Let no man
“ be informed,” said Boaz, “ where you slept last
“ night.” And saying this, he wished me a
good day: but “ Hold out first,” said he, “ the
“ veil you had last night upon you, and return
“ not empty handed to your mother.” I obeyed
him, and he measured out this barley for you,
being full six measures.

Naomi. In good time, dear Ruth; dispose
thereof within, or rather put it down here by
you, and be patient till you learn what turn the
affair will take between lord Boaz and yourself.
For my part I can guess the issue, since I know
the man will take no rest till he has finished
every

every thing, if every thing be not already finished ; but here comes our neighbour. Now what news, good Chileon ? you seem hurried ?

Chileon. And I am so, with the news I have to mention. Can you guess ? or very possibly you are prepared for the intelligence.

Naomi. For what intelligence ?

Chileon. For what ! Why is it possible that neither you nor Ruth yet know it, when the city echoes on the occasion, and your Ruth may think herself the happiest of her sex ?

Ruth. The happiest, say you ! Tell us what has happened.

Chileon. Are you serious ? and has nothing then transpired of all the good lord Boaz means to do you both ?

Naomi. Suppose there have not ; and make known what tidings you have brought us. It concerns, you say, lord Boaz : What of him, then, and whence come you ?

Chileon. From the city gate ; where, when I left it, all the Elders were assembled, and your name and Ruth's particularly mentioned.

Naomi. In what manner ?

Chileon. You shall hear ; for I would shew myself your friend, and am rejoiced to bring

such tidings. By good fortune, I was there at sun rise, and saw Boaz coming.

Ruth. Well?

Chileon. He entered the assembly, took his place among the Elders, and required that they should send to fetch a certain person, who, it seems, is of your kin, Naomi. His abode is by the gate; and therefore he made no long tarrying, he appeared as soon as summoned. He too took his place, when Boaz thus addressed him: “Naomi,” said he, “who is returned from Moab, means to sell a tract of land, held lately by Elimelech our brother; and I thought to tell you of it. If then you are minded to redeem it, do so; for (yourself excepted), there is no one of his kindred, saving me, and I am after you.”

Naomi. Well, Chileon?

Chileon. Well, Naomi; and to this the other answered, “I have heard you, brother, and will instantly redeem it.”

Naomi. And is this the intelligence you bring to make us happy?

Chileon. Be not so impatient: there is something else I have to tell you; for to this, said Boaz: “Yes; but when you buy this field of Naomi, you are to have it from one Ruth, the wife of her late husband’s heir, and who is likewise

“ likewise now deceased. You are, in fact,
“ to marry her, that you may raise the name
“ up of the dead in his inheritance.”

Naomi. And what replied the kinsman?

Chileon. Boaz having mentioned the conditions, this is what he answered: “ If the case be so, I cannot buy it for myself, lest I should mar my own inheritance. Do you then buy it, seeing you are yet unmarried:” And so saying, he drew off his shoe, and gave it Boaz, as is here the custom, to confirm the agreement. Boaz took his shoe, and thus addressed the elders: “ Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought Elimelech’s possession, which had come already to his son, and with it likewise, Ruth his widow, who is now to be my wife; that by God’s aid I may raise up the name of the deceased, in his inheritance.” — “ Yes, yes,” replied the Elders, “ we are witnesses of this transaction; and may God make your intended wife, like Rachel and her sister Leah, that built up the family of Jacob; while, respecting you, may you be famous here in Bethlehem, and behold your house resemble that of Pharez, in the seed which God shall give you.” Saying this, the Elders rose together, when I left the place to bring you these good tidings. I have

have done so, and the Lord, dear neighbours, give you joy of the event.

Ruth. Thanks, Chileon.

Nabmi. Let me thank you also. And what now if we go in; for Boaz, I am sure, will soon be here, and we must welcome him on his arrival as becomes us. This way, neighbour.

CXII. CXIII.

JUDGES iv.

THE FOURTH DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL, WITH THE DEATH OF SISERA.

BEFORE CHRIST 1296.

SCENE. *A tent.*

BARAK and DEBORAH.

DEBORAH.

WE are got to Zaanaim, Barak; and you see I am come with you; for your wish was such, though I informed you that this expedition would not, in the end, prove honourable

able to your fame ; since God would sell the leader of king Jabin's host, that Sisera, whom you are speedily to meet, into a woman's hand, as you will find he has, before the day is ended.

Barak. May his will be always done : but our affairs are in a hopeless situation. This is the fourth servitude, our brethren have already been oppressed with. If then, by my arms, I can deliver Israel from the yoke, what matters it, although a woman, in reality, *do* share the glory of that action with me. You yourself, I need not tell you, are a woman, and God's providence hath chosen you to be a judge among us. By your presence here, as you will certainly contribute to the overthrow of Sisera (if he be overthrown), so too, in the delivery of our country flowing from it, will you be entitled to a portion of the glory we shall reap. And yet did I demur to have you with me ? On the other hand, when you sent messengers to me at Kadesh Napthali, from your abode beside the palm tree, saying : " Hath not God " commanded you to take ten thousand men, " and march them towards Mount Tabor, " whither he will bring you Sisera, king Ja- " bin's captain, and deliver him to be defeated " by your troops." — When, I repeat, this message was delivered me, what were the

terms

terms of my reply? Far from desiring to engross the glory of the battle to myself, did I not wish, you likewise, though a woman, should partake it with me; for remember, with what answer I sent back your messengers: “If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not, neither then will I.”

Deborah. All this is true; and I confess that, with the zeal you have for Israel, and your brethren’s welfare, no mean notions of self-love are mixed. Up, therefore, for the Lord, this day, will, by a woman’s hand, discomfit Sisera, or, rather, finish that discomfiture, which he designs your valour shall begin. You say, my presence will contribute to the overthrow of Sisera; and, yet, another woman is reserved to do what, in my zeal for Israel, I may wish I could accomplish, but in vain. Let me not envy then this woman the great reputation she will gain in Israel by the deed; but, though a prophetess, consider it my glory to pursue your bright example, and rejoice for what I am to do myself.

Barak. Have any of our spies returned, with information where the enemy have pitched their camp?

Deborah. They have not pitched their camp, but are arrayed for battle by the river Kishon, and

and will come to seek us here, if we delay. Nine hundred iron chariots are their force ; but be not you dismayed ; for they are all delivered up into your hand. Come, then, and let us go together. You shall lift your sword up in the fight, to conquer men ; and I will lift my hands up to prevail with God.

Barak. In God's name, then, set forward. I see Jael coming ; but the time will not permit leave-taking. (*They go out*).

Jael (entering). They are gone directly to the battle, which already is begun. Something, and yet I know not what, informs me I shall make myself, before the day be over, famous among woman kind, and that a name, no less illustrious than the title, *Saviour of my country*, will be soon bestowed upon me. Is it possible that I, a woman, shculd deserve so high an appellation ? But I set down visions of the night as if they were all real. I have dreamed, indeed, that matters should go thus and thus ; but what have been my waking thoughts ? Strange notion ! What could put it in my head, that I was pointed out to be an instrument in the delivery of my country ? Never let me flatter my ideas with so glorious a distinction. No, I do but fill up my imagination with vain hopes. And yet, are there

not

not many circumstances that conspire in favour of such hopes ? As, first, I am related to that Jethro, with whose daughter Zippora, our great deliverer Moses married : Then, too, though a Kenite, yet because my husband Heber has withdrawn himself from all communication with the Kenites, I am perfectly at peace with Jabin (otherwise we should not dwell in Zaanaim here) ; and therefore have good opportunity to do him harm, for the advantage of God's people. How I long to know which way the battle goes ! By Deborah I have been told, that God has brought the enemy to Kishon, as a certain prey designed for Barak. Hark ! even from this place the shouting of both armies may be heard ; and, if I err not, it might seem that one or other of the hosts already is defeated, for mixed shouts, the shouts of a victorious and a vanquished party, strike me. Can the battle be so soon decided ? But why not ? The Lord, who frequently gives conquest to the weaker, may increase the miracle, and give it in a moment. Grant it may so prove this day to Israel.—But what is it I behold ! Am I awake, or sleeping ? Surely I see Sifera approaching ; but in what condition ! He has lost the fight, and left his chariot ; so that he may fly on foot.

Yes,

Yes, yes, I am not wrong in my conjecture! It *is* Sisera; and the disorder he appears in amply speaks him conquered.

Sisera (*entering in confusion*). Whither shall I turn for safety? Was there ever yet discomfiture so instantaneous! It is plain their God fights for them! Ours have no such speedy conquest to bestow. Oh, Jael! pity me; for I have lost the battle, and our men fly different ways, just like a flock of sheep, when wolves run in among them, and their keepers are far distant.

Jael (*aside*). Blessed be the God of Moses for this circumstance!—(*To Sisera*). Turn in to us, my lord. Our tent shall be your shelter; for no enemy will dare come in to hurt you.

Sisera. You are not a foe, as all are in this country, to my master; and may shew your love for Jabin by concealing his unhappy servant.

Jael. And I will conceal you. Turn in, therefore, without loss of time. You tremble, and are out of breath.

Sisera. I am fatigued; and my parched tongue is cleaving to my palate, while I speak, for want of drink. Give me, pray give me instantly, a drop of water to allay my thirst.

Jael. I have some milk here in a bottle.

Drink,

Drink, and be refreshed. And now, my lord, there is a bed within. Lie down upon it, and rely upon my word that you are safe.

Sisera. Thanks, Jael: I will do so. Stand you at the door, while I am sleeping; and should any one pass by, and ask if you have seen me, answer, "No."

Jael. Leave me to manage for you, and go in. (*Sisera withdraws*).—Anxiety and labour have completely overcome his spirits; and, exhausted as he is, he will be soon asleep. A glorious thought takes birth within me; and a notion that the visions of my sleep are now to be accomplished, gives me courage, while my arm, although a woman's, is, methinks, as strong as Barak's. It is all for Israel, for God's people; *that* shall be the apology for what I am about to do, which otherwise might be considered cruel. I will steal upon him as he sleeps. I need not fear him; for if God but prosper my intention, he shall never wake again to cry, "Who hurts me?" (*She goes out*).

Barak (*coming in some short time after*). They are scattered: they fly different ways, and Deborah encourages the Israelites in their pursuit. Such is a woman's prowess, when God strengthens her; but whither can this Sisera have fled? His chariot wheels at the beginning of

of the fight, were crushed together, and he fled on foot. But here comes Jael.

Jael (re-entering with a hammer in her hand). Welcome from the fight, my lord ; and welcome from the conquest of God's enemies.

Barak. Thanks, Jael, for your salutation. Of a truth, God's enemies are overthrown ; but Sisera is fled away. What ails you ; and what deed have you been doing with that hammer in your hand ?

Jael. Ask you of Sisera, my lord ? Go in, and let whatever you behold speak for me.—*(After Barak has retired).* With this hammer and a nail, I went up softly to him, and directly drove it through his temples. He expired upon the spot, and hardly gave a groan. Let no one call me cruel ; for my countrymen have been oppressed these twenty years, and now are free again. Here comes the leader back.

Barak (returning). Was this your doing, Jael ? this, I will not call it cruel, but illustrious action ? for the Lord has in his providence directed it ; and you are that thrice favoured woman he has thus made choice of from among so many, to deliver his unhappy people from their thraldom. Deborah, before the battle, told me this day's victory would be compleated by a woman's head. Enjoy your triumph, therefore,

fore, whilst I go and finish the pursuit of those we have dispersed; till when, farewell thrice favoured of the God of Israel. (*He goes out.*)

Jael. And farewell you likewise, favoured by the Lord of hosts; and now will I go in and bury Sisera. Who would have thought, that he who, hardly two hours since, had the conducting of an army, covering so much ground, should, in a moment, be reduced to that small spot he lies on, and indebted to my bounty for the grave I mean to dig him.

CXIV.

JUDGES V.

THE SONG OF DEBORAH AND
BARAK.

SING to the Lord, exalt his name
For aiding Israel's cause;
When forth a willing people came
To combat for his laws.

Ye princes that bear rule, give ear,
Each seated on his throne,
While we, God's sacred seat draw near,
And make his grandeur known.

When

When forth from Seir and Edom's coasts
Our way we hither took,
Aw'd by the power that led our hosts,
Earth's solid pillars shook.

E'en Sina trembled to its base
Th' Omnipotent before ;
And lightnings fill'd the holy place,
With thunders echoing roar.

In Shamgar's time, and these our days,
Till noble Jael sprung,
The traveller halted in bye-ways,
With rankling weeds o'er-run.

For every public path upturn'd
Lay lonely, waste, and bare ;
Nor could one vestige be discern'd
Of any footsteps there.

The villagers through Israel's land,
Though once a joyous throng,
Were sinking fast beneath the hand
Of tyranny and wrong,

Till Deborah rose, by Heaven inform'd,
How Israel might be freed ;
Her soul a parent's kindness warm'd,
When such was Israel's need.

Their

Their knee to idols they had bent,
 Though war their gates were near ;
 And though to meet the war, they went
 With neither shield nor spear.

We praise the Rulers of the land,
 Who willingly came forth ;
 Let Israel too, with heart and hand,
 Applaud their patriot worth.

Speak ye that on white asses ride,
 In solemn state and slow,
 And in the judgment seat preside,
 Heaven's substitutes below.

Your song, they likewise, by the Lord
 From thraldom sav'd, shall join,
 And in their gates, with one accord,
 Set forth his deeds divine.

Wake Deborah, wake, attune the song,
 And Barak wake thou too ;
 And who thee captive led along,
 Lead thou a captive crew.

For God thy arm with strength has strung
 And fir'd thy swelling soul,
 O'er mightiest chiefs, thy host among,
 To exercise controul.

E'en

Ev'n mightiest chiefs, deriv'd from them
That Amalek o'erthrew,
Chiefs, Benjamin, that on thy stem,
In Egypt's land first grew :

These mix'd with those by Machir sent
Of judges a long line,
Not eager rivals, but content
Their friendly aid to join,

With Zebulun's fam'd sons that use
The writer's ready pen,
Their leader Barak deign'd to chuse,
And Barak, Deborah then.

But Gilead, while such hosts were steel'd
The unequal war to brave,
Beyond broad Jordan's stream conceal'd,
Effay'd their lives to save.

Why did they so ? Why too did Dan
Within their vessels hide ?
And Asher, when the war began,
Not cross the foaming tide ?

But in their ports inglorious lay,
While Zebulun alone,
And Naphtali, provok'd the fray,
With death familiar grown.

Therefore did God himself come down
In their behalf to fight,
And every star's malignant frown,
Yea each, that scowls by night,

On Sisera lower'd, while Kishon's waves
Inundated his host,
Who made but an exchange of graves,
By fleeing to its coast.

Curse, said the angel of the Lord,
Yea curse ye Meroz' plain ;
By all too be its name abhor'd
That recreant hearts disdain ;

Because in arms they rush'd not out,
To aid us when we fought ;
And life with bonds, than death without,
A greater blessing thought.

But most, among all woman kind,
Shall Jael be admir'd ;
Ev'n Heber's wife, whose tow'ring mind
The glorious deed inspir'd,

Of luring Sisera to her tent,
There heav'n fore-doom'd to die ;
When, with the toil of fight o'er-spent,
The chief came stagg'ring by.

No more than water, he implor'd
Her charity would give :
But from her bottle, milk she pour'd,
That he might drink and live.

Fool ! on the friendship thus profess'd
Uncautious to go in !
And on the ground, with sleep oppress'd,
His weary body fling.

Then Jael, was thy time to take
A nail that lay in view,
And cruel, but for Israel's sake,
His temples drive it through.

Thus, while in sleep's embrace he lay,
Gave Sisera up the ghost,
And from a window far away,
That look'd tow'r'd Kishon's coast,

Kept his fond mother gazing out ;
And ever and anon,
Our few supposing put to rout,
And conquerors their vast throng,

Yet wond'ring at his long delay,
Thus thro' the lattice cry'd,
Half hopeful, and half sad : " Where stay
" His wheels the way beside ?

“ Hast thou not prosper’d, and the spoil
 “ Distributed as due?
 “ To each, fit recompence for toil,
 “ A beauteous maid or two?
 “ And for thyself a kerchief chose,
 “ With divers colours wrought:
 “ Apt trophy for the neck of those
 “ That valiantly have fought?”

Vain question to the deaf address’d,
 And ne’er to have reply:
 Oh may each troubler of our rest
 Thus prematurely die!

But like the sun, divinely bright,
 May Israel’s every friend
 Shine forth, nor find, till age’s night,
 His life’s noon glories end.

CXV. CXVI.

JUDGES VI.

**THE ISRAELITES FIFTH THRAL-
DOM, AND GOD'S CHOICE OF
GIDEON.**

BEFORE CHRIST 1245.

SCENE. *A threshing floor.*

JOASH and GIDEON.

JOASH.

FORBEAR, my son. In vain would you persuade me: for what likelihood, that God should thus chuse *you*, who are the poorest of our tribe, to be the favourer of his people.

Gideon. That was what I said myself, when on this very spot, where we are now conversing, I discerned the Almighty's angel standing by me, sent, as it appears, to let me know his pleasure.—Will you hear me, father?—Hitherto, have I kept silence; being, as I was, so doubtful that my destination really was that I am at last convinced it is. On that assurance, I proceeded to the act that all night long has occupied

cupied me ; and for which, I am aware I shall have all the Midianites upon me. I would fain have had some previous conversation with you, but could learn of no one where you might be found. I was determined, therefore, to obey the impulse in me, and destroy this Baal, whom the Midianites thus worship, notwithstanding they are sensible it is no better than a block of wood. "I could have wished," said I, "my father were but here ! I shall, however, see him in the morning, when but few or none are stirring, and must then explain what reasons urge me to this deed, and that must satisfy me." It was thus I argued with myself, and then proceeded without hesitation to my scheme.

Joash. Yes, yes, so say *I* likewise : without hesitation !

Gideon. Interrupt me not, in this wise, I beseech you ; but the morning being come, and having yielded to my summons, hear the whole I wish to tell you. There is *that* at the conclusion of my story, which must unavoidably convince you. Yes, dear father, be persuaded I am master of my understanding, when I tell you this ; and give me your attention.

Joash. Well then speak, dear son ; for I will hear you.

Gideon.

Gideon. Not a week is past, when I was threshing by the wine press where we stand at present. I had pitched on such a place to prosecute my task, that I might not be noticed by the Midianites ; for need I tell you, they have now been our oppressors nearly seven long years, and we are not permitted to enjoy what our own hands have laboured to procure.

Joash. Yes, yes, dear Gideon ; that I know full well. Alas four great deliverances, and six and forty years' tranquillity, enjoyed since Barak was our saviour, have not taught us righteousness. Our sins have brought a fifth subjection on us : But go on.—

Gideon. Well, I was threshing here, when lo an angel suddenly appeared before me, saying : “ Hail ! the Lord is with thee, mighty “ man of valour.”

Joash. But how know you, for a certainty, it was an angel ?

Gideon. Wait till you have heard the rest. I looked, and being animated by his gracious presence, was encouraged to reply as follows : “ Oh my lord, if God indeed be with me, “ why, with my whole country, am I thus “ oppressed ? and where are all the miracles “ our fathers told us of ? He brought them “ out of Egypt, but has now delivered us into

“ the hand of Midian.” Upon this, the angel, looking at me, said “ Go, son of Joash, in thy might, and thou shalt snatch thy brethren from their servitude. The Lord hath sent me on this errand to thee.” But I answered “ wherewithal shall I snatch Israel from their servitude? Behold, my family is poor and needy in Manasseh, and myself am verily the lowest in my father’s house.” To this I would have added more, but he prevented me by saying: “ Have I not assured thee God has sent me on this errand? God will aid thy arm; and thou shalt smite the Midianites as if they were one man.”

Joash. This circumstance I never heard of.

Gideon. No: I was unwilling to reveal the thing till sure of having really been called by God: but when, last night, the matter seemed confirmed, I got me into Baal’s temple, and destroyed his image: but I wander from the point. The angel uttered these last words in such a way as to inspire my heart with confidence; yet still I had my doubts; and to remove them, I replied: “ If now I have found favour in thy sight, give me a sign that every thing shall come to pass, as thou hast said. Depart not hence till I return.” The angel heard me, and made answer that he would

not

not leave the place : on which I hasted up into the house, and killed a kid, which having boiled, I brought it forth, together with a cake ; both which I offered to the angel ; but he bade me put them on the rock hard by. I did so ; when he held his staff out, and fire issued from the rock, which soon consumed them ; upon which the angel vanished.

Joash. And relying on this visitation, you proceeded to demolish Baal's image ?

Gideon. Hear me further ; for as yet I have not finished. I was pondering on this thing till yesterday at noon, when, being weary, I laid down to sleep ; and had a dream, in which the Lord commanded me to throw down Baal's image, and root up the grove that grows hard by it. I awoke ; but fearing still to undertake this enterprize, though wishing to perform it, when I saw that God had ordered me to do so, I required another sign. " If thou hast really commanded me, oh God," said I, " to do this thing, behold ! I am about to lay a fleece of wool upon the ground ; and after sun set, when the dew has had sufficient time to fall, if there should be no moisture on the ground about the fleece, but only in the wool, then shall I know I am to be thy instrument in saving Israel." I spread out

the fleece accordingly ; and just before I should have gone to rest, went out that I might view the expected miracle : when lo ! I thrust the fleece together, and squeezed out at least a bowl of water.

Joash. It was now, then, you proceeded to destroy the image ?

Gideon. No, not yet : I was in some degree still fearful ; and once more presumed, " Oh " God," said I, " let not thine anger burn " against me, if I venture to entreat one other " miracle. Upon the morrow let the fleece " alone be dry, and all the ground about it " dewy." This last miracle I have not yet had proof of ; for at midnight, as I lay and thought, my unbelief in the Almighty's promises confounded me, and I considered it my duty to do something instantly, that might denote the strength of my reliance on his word. I therefore rose, and did this thing to Baal. I performed it on the instant, without further hesitation, and the more so, as I thought that in the day time I should be obstructed. This is the whole history. What think you of it, father ?

Joash. That the Midianites, when they discover the destruction, will revenge themselves.

Gideon. Oh let them. God will save me from

from their fury. In the mean time, father, that you likewise may be sure I have done nothing of myself, go out and view the fleece. It is now lying near the well hard by, and I am certain you will find the miracle accomplished.

Joash (going out). I am anxious to see this.

Gideon (alone). The sun is risen, and the people of the city will be shortly here to worship their beloved wooden god. They cannot fail of being told that I have done them all this mischief, and what then will be the consequence?—No matter what: the God, whose inspiration urged me forward to demolish Baal, will protect me now, that I have paid obedience to his order. It was time indeed to vindicate God's honour, when the sins of Israel were so great, that my own father had incurred the guilt of their idolatry: but this destruction will enlighten his dark understanding; and recall him to the worship of Jehovah. I behold him coming back again.—Well father.

Joash (re-entering). I am satisfied; and henceforth part with all my image-worship, let whatever be the consequence. I found indeed the fleece quite dry, and not that only, but the ground it covered, while the dew lay elsewhere very thick. In this there can be no deception. The Almighty only could have done so great a

miracle. Prepare, however, to confront the Midianites, for I could see them coming from the city. They will instantly be told what hand has thus disgraced their Baal.

Gideon. Yes, I judge so, and consider that the sooner they are told, the better. Let them come. I fear not any thing they have it in their power to do. In God's assistance, I am strong enough to combat a whole host of men combined against me. Hark! I think I hear them?

Joash. Yes, indeed, and they are now approaching.

Gideon. Let the door be opened then; and you shall see how I will face them.

Joash. There; and be the God of Israel your defence.

Enter several MIDIANITES.

First Midianite. Audacious Israelite! and is it you then, that have done this sacrilege. Our god, his altar, and the grove all impiously demolished!

Gideon (to his father). Let them, if they chuse, come on. Yes, Midianites, I am the doer of this sacrilege.

Second Midianite. He glories in the crime. Help Midianites! Lay hand upon him.

Joash. Friends—

Third Midianite. What! mean you to defend him, though he be your son?

Joash.

Joash. Hear me, good people. I design not to excuse the wickedness he has committed; but let first of all the wickedness be ascertained. Go to the city gate, and summon either party there in judgment. Let this God of ours appear; for surely he can work a miracle; and then let Gideon answer. Go, good people, I will follow with him, and intreat that signal justice be awarded.

First Midianite. We consent to have it as you counsel.—To the judgment! To the judgment, countrymen! Come, follow.

Joash. This way, son.

Gideon. Go you before, dear father.

CXVII. CXVIII.

JUDGES vii. viii.

THE FIFTH DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL, AND THEIR SUBSEQUENT IDOLATRY.

BEFORE CHRIST 1245.

THE Israelites had been for seven years past so grievously oppressed, that now, on the appearance of a saviour, in the character of Gideon,

Gideon, they flocked to him ; and his army soon increased to two and thirty thousand men ; but God, to make his people sensible that he alone was their defence, told Gideon that the army with him were so numerous, he could never yield them up the Midianites, lest they should think they had themselves done every thing. He ordered Gideon, therefore, to proclaim it through the host, that, granting any were distrustful of the cause they had engaged in, such should leave it. He did so, which shrank his numbers to ten thousand men : but even these few were more than God thought needful to perform his purpose. He suggested, therefore, something like a stratagem, not only to diminish them still further, but make trial of their virtue. They were ordered on the march to pass a river : As they crossed it, being dry, they drank, some kneeling, and a few not stooping otherwise than just to take up water in the hollow of their hands, and lift it to their lips. The number of these last amounted to three hundred, whom the Lord bade Gideon take, as those who should suffice to free his people from the Midianites.

The Midianites, with the Amalekites, had drawn their armies out, to fight with Gideon ; who, before the battle, chanced to overhear a
soldier

soldier, in his camp, relate a dream of the preceding night: "Behold," said he, "I saw a cake of barley bread fall down from heaven, into the Midianitish camp, upon a tent, and overturn it." "This" replied a fellow soldier by him, "is no other than the sword of Gideon; for the Lord hath put the Midianites into his hand." Encouraged by this dream and it's interpretation, Gideon ordered forth his little army. It was now dark night; and, therefore, he devised a stratagem, that he might frighten those whom he could never hope to overcome by open force. To every man, he gave a trumpet, with a pitcher, and a lamp suspended in it, which, no doubt, he was to use, as we do now dark lanthorns.

Having gained the hostile camp, the soldiers were to sound their trumpets, break the pitchers, and then holding up their lamp, cry out: *The Lord and Gideon!* — This succeeded: the affrighted enemy fled every way, supposing a much greater number had attacked them. Thus did Gideon's little army put them to the rout. A grievous slaughter followed. Many kings were slain. The Israelites were freed from their subjection, and for forty years ensuing this transaction, they continued faithful till their sins reduced them to another state of bondage.

For

For on Gideon's conquests, he was urged, by Israel, to become their leader, but he would not ; neither would he let his son. By way of present, he obtained, however, all the gold and jewels taken from the enemy as plunder, and with these he ornamented what is called an ephod, that is girdle, worn by Jewish priests, and laid it up in Ophrah, where he dwelt. This ephod proved a snare to Israel ; for when Gideon died, they turned from God, and paid the ephod worship. And this introduced the adoration which, soon afterward, they paid to other gods, as Baalim, Baal-berith, and the like.

CXIX.

JUDGES ix.

JOTHAM'S FABLE.

BEFORE CHRIST 1235.

SCENE. *The open country on a hill.*JOTHAM, *and a croud about him.*

JOTHAM.

HEAR me speak, good friends, for, as you know, I am the son of Gideon, whom, in admiration of his prowess in destroying Baal, you denominated Jerub-baal, and, for

for his sake, I deserve respect and kindness from you.

One of the Crowd. Speak, speak, speak, for we will hear you.

Jotham. In the city, though my brother has the power, I dare not use my tongue ; and, therefore, have I called you to this place, that I might once more give you good advice. If you will listen to it, well ; if not, when I have told you every thing, I will withdraw, and pass the remnant of my days in peace, where my unnatural brother will not have it in his power to hurt me. After having said thus much, shall I go on ?

Another of the Crowd. Yes, yes, fear nothing.

Jotham. In the first place, then, I say, that this Abimelech, my brother by a concubine, residing here at Shechem, having put to death my father, your deliverer's seventy sons, of whom I only have escaped, will hardly govern you with mercy. After this, will you continue in the wish of making such a one your king. If so, I have but one more argument :— it is a fable ; let me tell it, and instruct you by such means. Bear with me, my good friends. I am but weak. I love you notwithstanding, and am far from wishing to displease. Hear me then patiently, that God hereafter may hear you.

Another

Another of the Crowd. Proceed, proceed :
What is this fable ?

Jotham. It is this : Once on a time, the trees desired to have a king, and urged the olive to rule over them. But he replied : “ Should I “ forget my use, which is, to bring forth fruit “ that gratifies both God and man, and be pro- “ moted to a state, in which it will not profit “ me, that I produce such fruit ? ” And they invited then the fig-tree to rule over them. “ But “ no,” replied the fig-tree, “ am I not already “ to the full as happy as I wish to be, in my “ good fruit : Why, therefore, should I make “ myself unhappy, by consenting to promo- “ tion.” Upon this, they bade the vine rule over them. “ Not so,” replied the vine, “ I “ am already great enough, in yielding juice “ that chears the heart of God as well as man. “ Can I be greater then, however you exalt “ me ? Hereupon, they bade the bramble bush rule over them. And now, were all things changed ; for, in his pride and worthlessness, the bramble bush replied : “ If, in reality, you “ wish that I should be your king, let fire, this “ moment, issue from my branches, and burn “ up the tallest cedars on Mount Lebanon.” — This is my fable ; and now, brethren, for the application : — If ye have sincerely acted with my

my father, and his house, this day, in nominating such a king, rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let Abimelech rejoice in you: but if the contrary, in such case, as sure fire will issue from Abimelech to plague you, let as sure a fire proceed from you to plague Abimelech; and may you every one again be free. This is the whole I had to mention. Let it dwell in your remembrance; and if ever you wished Jerub-baal well, protect me till I get to Be-er: there will I conclude my days. But should you want my aid in future, you need only send me word, and, as a lover of my brethren, I will leave the place of my retreat.—Have I your promise of safe conduct thither?

Another of the Crowd. Yes: Come down. You are the youngest son of our deliverer; and we pledge our lives for your security.

Zotham. In that case, I fear nothing.

CXX.

JUDGES ix.

JOTHAM'S CURSE FULFILLED.

BEFORE CHRIST 1233.

ABIMELECH, who, having put to death so many of his brothers, got the rule, possessed it quietly, three years; when God to punish such a cruel deed, and likewise plague the Shechemites who had abetted him, forgetful of their great deliverer Jerub-baal, sent an evil spirit to excite sedition in his realm. The Shechemites, from that time forth, were on the watch to seize Abimelech; and he to grind them with his tyranny. In consequence of this inveterate hatred on both sides, did both Abimelech lay waste the Shechemites, and they distress their king. This last, as is related in the 9th of Judges, ravaged their strong holds, and was at last destroyed himself; for, from the tower of Thebez, which, with other places, he invested, and was just upon the point of burning, it was ordered by the Power which governs all things, that a woman, watching the fit opportunity, should fling the fragment of

of a mill-stone at him, which was so well aimed, as in the sacred writer's words, *to break his scull*. Abimelech, on this, called out to him that bore his armour, saying: “Draw thy sword and slay me, that it be not said, ‘—a woman killed Abimelech.’” The armour-bearer being thus commanded, thrust him through the heart, so that he died; and thus came Jotham's curse upon him.

CXXI.

THE SIXTH THRALDOM OF ISRAEL.

JUDGES X.

TO Abimelech, succeeded Tola, who, for three and twenty years, discharged the office or employ of judge in Israel. Upon Tola's death, a Gileadite, called Jair, was appointed, and continued in the place of Tola two and twenty years. His death brings down the history of Israel to the eleven hundred and sixty-first year before Christ. But some time previous to this period, had the Israelites returned to all their former sins; in punishment of which, did God, about the time of Jair's death,

death, deliver up his people to the Philistines and Ammonites, who grievously oppressed them eighteen years. In this distress they supplicated God, as they had frequently been used to do before, but he referred them for assistance to their idols. This rebuke was followed by the effect it was intended to produce among the Jewish people; for they put away their false divinities, and God was grieved, as we are told, at their distress, of which the issue proved, that he resolved to raise them up, as he had five times done already, a deliverer, who was Jephtha; and this turn in their behalf took place, when Israel had been bold enough to bring their armies to a place called Mizpeh, in the neighbourhood whereof the Ammonites were posted.

CXXII.

JUDGES X.

JEPHTHA CHOSEN JUDGE OF
ISRAEL.

BEFORE CHRIST 1187.

SCENE. *A dwelling in the land of Tob.*

JEPHTHA and certain ISRAELITES.

JEPHTHA.

FROM Mizpeh you are come?

An Israelite. From Mizpeh, and near Gilead, where the Ammonites, who threaten us with battle, are encamped. We are unworthy of the favours constantly received from God. To Gideon we behaved ungratefully, and chose Abimelech to govern us in preference to any of his seventy children, whom we cruelly assisted him to slay. We have renounced the only God, and worshipped Baalim and Ashtaroth, the gods of Syria, Zidon, Moab, Ammon, and the Philistines. In punishment of which, he hath delivered us into the power of these two last, and we are now your supplicants, most valiant Gileadite, that you would condescend to be our judge.

Jephtha,

Jephtha. But did ye not inveterately hate this Gileadite, to whom you come as supplicants at present? and because my mother was a harlot, chase me from her house, combining with my brother, that unnaturally thrust me out, and would not I should be an heir with them, begotten as I was? Are these things so? They are. Why therefore do you come to me in your distress?

Another Israelite. Because we are sincerely sorry for our past misconduct do we come. Relent then mighty man, in pity lead us forth to fight against the Ammonites, and let the Gileadites look up to you as to their head.

Jephtha. You touch me in the tenderest part. I have indeed withdrawn myself from all association with my brethren, yet I do not hate them. Granting, therefore, I should yield, and God give up the Ammonites into my hand, shall I continue afterward to be your head?

Another Israelite. Let God be witness for us when we say, " You shall."

This promise being made him, Jephtha went to Mizpeh with the Israelites, and taking up the office of their judge, sent messengers to Ammon, asking why he came to fight against his brethren. Ammon's answer was, because they took possession of his land from Ammon quite to Jabbok,

Jabbok, and to Jordan, from the Wilderness, when they had quitted Egypt ; but the Israelites asserted they had not done so ; for, on their coming out of Egypt, they sent messengers to divers kings, the king of Edom, of the Ammonites, and Heshbon, craving leave to pass through their dominions ; but that neither of the three would grant them passage, therefore were they forced to fight, and God had afterwards delivered up into their hands the land which Ammon said they had invaded. " Of that land," said Jephthah, " God deprived the Ammonites, " and would you have it ? " This was Jephthah's message ; but the Ammonites paid no attention to it, and their cause was after all to be decided by the sword.

CXXIII. CXXIV.

THE SIXTH DELIVERANCE OF THE
ISRAELITES, AND JEPHTHAH'S
VOW.

BEFORE CHRIST 1187.

SCENE in *Mizpeh*, before the house of *Jephthah*.

TWO INHABITANTS of MIZPEH.

FIRST INHABITANT.

GOOD Morrow to you, fellow citizen.
What news is there abroad?

Second Inhabitant. What! know you not the tidings?—that our enemy, the Ammonites, are routed and dispersed by Jephthah?

First Inhabitant. Something I have heard of such a rout; though, for a certainty, but very little: and is Israel then so happy?

Second Inhabitant. Yea, even so. The Ammonites are quelled by Jephthah; their whole land from Aroer even to Minnith, twenty cities, and the plain (for so they call it) of the vineyards. Thus are they subdued before the Israelites.

First Inhabitant. And what of Jephthah?

Second Inhabitant. In his zeal for Israel, nothing has he left undone that might contribute

to our welfare, neither since the battle nor before it. The whole night preceding did he pass in prayer, as I am told by one that waited on him in his tent. "Oh Lord," was he continually saying, "If thou manifest thyself so gracious, as to put the children of the Ammonites into my hands; in such a case, whoever cometh from my house to meet me, at the time of my return to Mizpeh, shall be thine, if I have any power upon him, and myself will offer up the sacrifice upon thy altar."

First Inhabitant. Did he utter such a vow in his desire to free us? God has listened to his supplication. When does he return?

Second Inhabitant. Can you enquire concerning what, without exception, the whole city know? This very day, and, possibly, while we are speaking, he will reach the gates.

First Inhabitant. Yon house, I think, is his?

Second Inhabitant. It is so?

First Inhabitant. Happy family, and happy father! With what transports, and with what congratulation of the citizens will not the former welcome home their country's saviour! With what joy will not the latter find himself restored to their embraces!

Second Inhabitant. Grant, good heaven, it prove so in the end! but I, for my part, fear this restoration, as you say, to their embraces, may occasion some calamity.

First Inhabitant. By reason of his vow you mean?

Second Inhabitant. Undoubtedly, I do. Wherefore should he have pledged himself to such a sacrifice?

First Inhabitant. And do you think then he will keep it?

Second Inhabitant. Do I think so?—But these trumpets speak his entry into Mizpeh. He is at the gates, and will be quickly here.

First Inhabitant. He will so.—In my judgment, he will hardly add the sin of keeping such a promise to the rashness of first making it; but he is here, and we shall know what he designs to do in such a situation, if we tarry and observe him.

(*Trumpets.*)

Enter JEPHTHAH and attendants.

Jephthah. Thanks be to the God of Israel, who has, after such a victory, safe restored me to the bosom of my family.—But what do I behold! ah me!—(*Enter Jephtha's daughter playing on a timbrel.*—(*Jephthah turns away.*))

The Daughter. Oh welcome home, dear father! Welcome to your dear and only daughter!

ter! you have long been absent.—But, what ails you? are you seized with sudden illness? you turn pale, and your whole body trembles! Help! support him friends! or he will fall!

Jephthah. Alas! Are you my child? let me not look upon you: but my resolution comes too late.

The Daughter. Too late! What resolution mean you? Speak dear father, if you can, and tell me the occasion of all this.

Jephthah. Alas! dear daughter! you are the occasion. Would to heaven that I had never seen you.

The Daughter. Never seen me! What! when I was counting the slow minutes as they passed, and ever and anon enquiring of my maids when they supposed you would return, have you been wishing you had never seen me; but some mystery is hid beneath all this. Tell me, dear father, once more I intreat, what it may mean?

Jephthah. When you shall know it, you will curse me.

The Daughter. Curse you! What! the author of my life!

Jephthah. No; I am not the author of your life, for I have sentenced you to death.—Oh country, that once thrust me out, why was I reconciled to you again? I should have saved

my child, had I but hated you, as your unkindness to my youth deserved. What shall I say, dear child, for I have bound myself to kill you! Yes, however horrid it may strike upon your ear, I have severely vowed to kill my child.

The Daughter. To kill me! and what sin have I committed?

Jephthah. None. The sin lies at my door. I loved my country; and before I fought to save it from the Ammonites, I promised in God's hearing, that provided he vouchsafed me to subdue the king of Ammon, I would sacrifice the first belonging to me that should issue forth to meet my steps, when I returned. You are the first, that prompted by a childlike spirit of affection, have come forth, and must you die for this?

The Daughter. Dear father, I have so much of your virtue in my veins, that if for Israel you could make this vow, I, that you may not break it, and incur God's wrath, can die.

Jephthah. What do I hear? Alas! this filial answver, while it closes up one wound, afflicts me with another.

The Daughter. Time will likewise close up that. Leave it to time, while all the favour I request, by way of putting off my sentence is, that

that I may have two months allowed me to bewail upon the mountains my virginity.

Jephthah. Blessed be the tongue that thus suggests a two months' respite, previous to the perpetration of a deed, whereon my soul recoils to think. Go dear, but hapless daughter, while I hide myself in some lone corner of that habitation I was anxious to revisit: and you, Gileadites, make ready for rejoicing that your leader is returned victorious, while your leader weeps, that, for this victory, he must pay down a price much dearer to him than that life, which, had he lost in battle, he should now have been most blessed. (*Jephthah, his daughter, and attendants all go out. The two inhabitants first present stay behind.*)

First Inhabitant. Well, now what think you?

Second Inhabitant. Let us follow and observe him farther.

CXXV. CXXVI.

JUDGES xiii.

THE SEVENTH THRALDOM OF THE
ISRAELITES, AND BIRTH OF SAM-
SON.

BEFORE CHRIST 1155.

JEPHTHAH, having put to death his daughter, had a quarrel with the men of Ephraim, who complained they were not called on to assist him in the war against the common enemy. But Jephthah said in his defence, they had refused to come when summoned. Upon this, a fight ensued, and two and forty thousand Ephraimites were slain by Jephthah's party; after which, he died when he had judged his people only for the period of six years. To him, succeeded Ibzan; after him, came Elon; after Elon, Abdon, and next Abdon, Eli; in whose person the high priesthood was translated from the family of Eliezer, Aaron's son, to that of Ithamar. The three preceding Eli, judged the people five and twenty years together. Notwithstanding every former punishment,

ment, the Israelites, by this time, had relapsed into their sins, and were, when Eli had been priest six years, delivered up to the Philistines, who oppressed them forty years: but God had scarcely willed their thralldom should take place, but in his goodness he ordained the means that should provide them with another saviour. In the tribe of Dan, there was an Israelite named Manoah. He was married; but his wife had never borne him any children. To this woman, God dispatched his angel with the promise of a son at the completion of the usual season. "Drink not therefore any wine," said he, "nor eat what Moses calls unclean. " And when this child is grown a man, no "rasor shall at any time come on his head; " for he shall be a Nazarite to God, and free "his countrymen at last from their oppressors." Having uttered this, the angel vanished; and the child, according to God's promise, was soon after born; who, being come to years of manhood, entered on his work by means that worldly wisdom would have thought but little suited to accomplish such a glorious end.

CXXVII. CXXVIII.

JUDGES XIV.

SAMSON'S MARRIAGE, AND HIS
RIDDLE.

BEFORE CHRIST 1137.

SAMSON, being twenty years of age and upward, visited a place belonging to the Philistines, called Timnath, where he saw a woman whom he married, but the consequences of this marriage were unhappy; since not many days were passed, when Samson's father went upon his invitation to advise him with respect to something that had then just happened: What that was, the following will explain.

The father, being got to Timnath, lost no time; but coming to the point immediately, required his son to mention upon what he wished for counsel.

“ Upon this,” said Samson, “ I arrived but yesterday from Askelon, where I have been: but what to do, you cannot, I am sure conjecture. What, but to kill thirty men!”

Manoah.

Manoah. To kill them! God forbid.

Samson. To kill them; and what further will amaze you, I have done the busines, and brought home the plunder taken from them; thirty shirts, and thirty changes of apparel, which are now dispos'd of in the house.

Manoah. For heaven's sake, Samson, what means this? Distress not thus your aged father; but, provided you have really performed these murders, tell me what could move you to it.

Samson. Hear me therefore. Being on my way to Timnath, when my mother and yourself, as you remember, bore me company, that I might talk with my new wife, a lion roared against me at a moment you were, neither of you, present, but asleep; for it was early in the day, and I had left my bed, that I might walk about the meadows near the village we had inned at. I beheld the lion, and instead of being terrified, the spirit of the Lord came on me, and I rent him, as I would have done a kid. I told you not of this: but, on the following day, renewed my journey with you, and returning the same way, methought I would content my curiosity with looking at the lion's carcase. I turned towards it; when behold, there was a swarm of bees, and honey in it; of which last, I took a part, and ate it. I

remembered this ; and at the marriage-feast, which lasted, as you know, seven days, when I was merry with the guests, of which there were no less than thirty, and those thirty all young men, I told them (and the matter of the lion, as I said just now, supplied me with the hint), that I would set then forth a riddle, which, provided they could answer while the feast continued, I would give them thirty shirts, and thirty changes of apparel : but that if they could not, they, upon the other hand, should then give *me* as many shirts, and changes of apparel. They accepted the conditions, and desired to know my riddle. Now, what think you it could be ?

Manoah. Alas, I know not.

Samson. Be not so dejected. It was this ; and as I said before, the adventure of the lion had supplied me with it. *From the eater came forth meat, and from the strong came sweetness.* Three whole days they studied ; but could not find out the hidden meaning.

Manoah. And to what does all this lead ?

Samson. That I am now to tell you. Having studied, as I said, three days, they gave the matter up ; but wishing to obtain the shirts, and changes of apparel, practised on my wife : “ Entice,” said they, “ your husband, to de-

“ clare

“clare the riddle, and then tell us what it
“is ; or we will burn your father’s house,
“and every creature in it. Have you set him
“on to rob us by a riddle?” To such pitch
did they pursue their violence, or so, at least,
my wife informed me they essayed to practise
on her weakness.

Manoah. Well ? *Samson.* On which, my wife in turn began to practise on *my* weakness. She sighed grievously, and said, “ You do but hate me, “ having thus put forth a riddle to the children “ of my people, and not told me what it is : ” To which I answered, I had neither let my mother or you know : How then could she imagine I would tell it *her*. But this reply was not sufficient : she kept teasing me, shed many tears, and had such other artifices at command, that on the seventh day morning I complied, and told her every thing, which she accordingly communicated to the guests, who came that very evening ; and by way of telling me the meaning of my riddle, said, “ What can be stronger than a lion ? what so “ sweet as honey ? ” I perceived how I had been betrayed, and could not keep from answering, with a tone of deep vexation : “ If “ ye had not thought of plowing with my
“ heifer,

“ heifer, ye would never have found out my
“ riddle ; but the shirts and changes of ap-
“ parel shall be ready for you in five days at
“ furthest.” I allowed myself this time to
get them in the manner I have mentioned ;
meaning, in the interim, to send for you to
Timnath, that at least you might instruct me
how I should proceed when they had got their
prize, for which they are to come this very day ;
and every minute I expect them. Fortunately
you are come before them. Tell me then,
dear father, how would you advise me.

Mansah. Ah, dear son, I speak not now in
condemnation of the violence that could pro-
ceed to thirty murders, that the wager you had
fairly lost might not be left unsatisfied, be-
cause all blame upon that article would come
too late. I must, however, grievously com-
plain, that notwithstanding every thing we
could advance against this marriage with a
Philistine, and therefore enemy, you were
determined on it. This is the first misery
flowing from that fatal marriage, which, I
fear, will in the end be followed by too many
others. Do both me and your poor mother so
much justice, as to own we left no argument
unsaid, that might dissuade you. “ Is there
“ no one,” were our words, “ among the
“ daughters

“ daughters of your brethren, that you needs
 “ must go and take a wife of the uncircum-
 “ cised Philistines ?” But to this, all your
 reply, and that too spoken with such vehemence,
 as little suited a young man who had the least
 degree of reverence for his parents, was as
 follows: “ Get her for me since she pleases
 “ me.”

Samson. Well father; this is likewise too
 late now. What would you have me do ?

Manoah. Do, son ? what but flee hence to
 Zorah with me. When these murders are once
 known, the country will be up in arms. You
 cannot surely but think so yourself. What
 then will be the consequence to you, to me,
 and your poor mother ? Flee then with me
 hence, and bring not our old age to death with
 sorrow, by remaining here in Timnath. Once,
 we had no children ; that we thought a great
 affliction, but to lose that one, whom we sup-
 posed we had been blessed with, how severely
 must not such affliction pain us, and particularly
 now, when, in the withering season of our life,
 we are less able to endure affliction ! Will you
 go with me, dear son ?

Samson. Yes, will I ; for to have advice and
 counsel I desired to see you.—But my wife :—
 Must I forsake my wife ?

Manoah.

Manoah. How blind has passion made you! She is false; she has betrayed your secret; added to all which, she is a Philistine, and is not every Philistine our enemy. Oh heaven! oh heaven! When you were born, God's angel prophesied that you should be the saviour of our country from oppression; and is this the way you take to be so! Nothing of the whole, already done, however, can be now undone. Flee then, at least, from Tinmath with me, and avoid that death which, if you tarry here, will be inevitable. If you estimate thus cheaply your own safety, kill not your unhappy parents.

Samson. Come, dear father; I comply, and will go with you; so farewell at once my wife and Tinmath.

CXXIX.
JUDGES XV. XVI.

FURTHER HISTORY OF SAMSON.

BEFORE CHRIST BETWEEN 1136 AND 1117
YEARS.

ALL the extravagant exploits of Samson may be reconciled to that great end he was to bring about (*videlicet*, the rescue of his country from its Philistine oppressors), if we meditate on the mysterious ways of Providence, that frequently employs what we may fancy inefficient causes, when compared with the events they lead to. And in nothing more than in the life of Samson, may these ways of Providence be seen ; for, after having at his father's prayer accompanied him home, his heart was still, as we shall see from what is now to follow, with his wife, whom he resolved to visit with a kid, by way of gift.

Accordingly, he came to Timnath ; but received the melancholy information that his wife was given away in marriage to another ; doubtless for those murders he had perpetrated on the thirty men at Askelon. For this, he meditated

meditated vengeance on the Philistines, as follows: It appears, he caught three hundred foxes, which he tied together by the tails, and put a lighted firebrand between every two. This done, he turned them all, at once, into the corn-fields, vineyards, olive-gardens, and whatever other species of plantation-grounds the Philistines possessed, and thus irreparably spoiled their future harvest.

It was known immediately by all the Philistines, what enemy had done them so much mischief; in revenge for which, they burnt his wife, together with her father, in their dwelling, probably because it was through them the country had become obnoxious to the rage of such an enemy; though subsequent transactions had exempted them from blame in this affair. When Samson was informed of this, he said, “Though ye have served me thus, yet will I be avenged upon you; and when that is done, desist.” In consequence of this, he smote them hip and thigh, as the expression is, destroying many; after which he took up his abode upon the summit of a rock. The Philistines came out to take him, and three thousand men of Judah, whom, perhaps, this conduct, on the part of Samson, might considerably injure, interfered between them. They

They went up, and asked him saying: “Know you not that the Philistines are our rulers? what is this then you have done?” To which he answered: “As they did to me, so have I done to them.” On this, they told him they were come to bind and give him up to the Philistines. Samson here required their oath, that they would not themselves fall on him. Whereupon he yielded to be bound; but when the Philistines had got him, and were thinking in what manner they should be revenged, the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, when he burst his bands; and rushed upon the Philistines, destroying upwards of a thousand men, although he had no other weapon than an ass’s new jaw bone, which, it appears, he found upon the spot. The slaughter being over, he was thirsty; and intreated drink of God, who clave a hollow in the bone, from which there came out water, and he drank.

His spirit being now revived, he went to Gaza, where he fell into a harlot’s company, who entertained him. News soon circulated of his being in the woman’s house; and the inhabitants begirt it, so that they might take and kill him in the morning: but at midnight, Samson, having got intelligence of their intention,

tion, rose, and took the city gates, posts, bar, and all upon his shoulders, carrying them clear off; by which exertion, he escaped.

CXXX.

JUDGES xvi.

THE DEATH OF SAMSON.

BEFORE CHRIST, 1117.

SCENE. *The space before a prison.*

MANOAH and a GOALER.

MANOAH

WHEN do you say, sir, he comes out?

Goaler. Wait here, good man; and, in a very little time, you may expect to see him. Every day the lords permit him to walk forth, and now is it about the time.

Manoah. And did you say then *blind*?

Goaler. I did.

Manoah. What both his eyes put out?

Goaler. Both! both!

Manoah. Oh heaven! oh heaven! When I was told the Philistines had thrown him into prison, I made haste to visit him, and was prepared

pared for an unhappy interview: but little did I think it would be half so miserable as this loss will make it to me. And how long, pray, has he been confined?

Goaler. About twelve days.

Manoah. Alas! The sixth day after, I was told of his unhappy fortune, and set out immediately. But when, sir, were his eyes put out?

Goaler. The third day after his arrival here: but he is coming, and I leave you to yourselves.
(*He goes out.*)

Enter SAMSON (*groping his way*).

Manoah. Alas, my son!

Samson. Alas, my father! This is the first time I have experienced my calamity a blessing. Had I but my eyes, how should I look you in the face, reflecting I have brought so much affliction on you!

Manoah. Would to God, dear Samson, I were likewise without eyes, that I might not behold you in this helpless situation. I came hither, having heard of your condition by a friend, and knew I should behold my son in prison, but alas, not dark and blind.

Samson. Had God endowed me with his grace; had he but filled my mind with wisdom, when he gave me that pernicious strength of frame

frame I had of late, I should not be that wretched creature I am now. Yet let me not complain of God, but of myself; for am I not become what, it might seem by my demeanour, I *desired* to be? Oh, Father of my life, and giver of that strength I lately made my boast of, but which gift I have so grievously abused,—accept my feeble vindication of thy justice in decreeing this calamity should prove my lot. Through folly was I brought into my present situation. I receive it as a punishment from thee, imploring it may make me sensible of wisdom. With my body in prosperity I was a rebel to thy will: oh grant that with my spirit in adversity I may return into the path of duty. Having sight, alas! I would not see it; but the loss of that inestimable blessing has convinced me there *was* such a path in which I *should* have thought it, would have made happy, had I walked.

Manoah. Oh the unhappy day!

Samson. If any thing can render it less miserable it is this: that he, who when a judge of Israel, was without affection, duty, or compassion for his parents, and passed all his nights in harlotry, now every day weeps tears of blood upon the pavement of his prison house, at the idea of those sorrows he has brought upon their

their age : but for himself, receives his punishment with resignation, conscious that the sins he has committed stand in need of such a sacrifice, or he can never hope in future to see God.

Manoah. Thank heaven, I am not, I can see, so wretched as I thought I was, since I hear this !

Samson. Hear more, and let it add still further consolation to your grief, since I am greatly comforted : for tell me, father, which should I repent me of most heartily,—of having haunted the abode of prostitutes, who brought me to this state ? or of this state, which, on the other hand, will bring me, as I trust, to God ?

Manoah. Oh, comfortable sounds !

Samson. His grace kept constantly pursuing me ; but I despised it's admonitions. After such re-iterated warning therefore, was I finally permitted to become the victim of my enemies. I had escaped already here at Gaza from the treachery of one harlot, but exposed myself soon after to another in the vale of Sorek. False, false, Dalilah !—May I not bear my punishment with resignation, and yet curse the author of these fetters ? Thrice was I convinced, dear father, of her infamy : there wanted but a fourth endeavour on her part to ruin me ;

and

and it succeeded. She gave intimation of my being with her to the Philistines, and bargained with them for my person. "Tell me," were her words, "can there be found no means to bind you?" Saying this, she played the wanton, and I, willing to hold dalliance with her, answered: "were I to be bound with seven green withs, I should be just like other men." With seven such withs she bound me, while I held her out my arms; but after she had done the work, I burst them, and broke out into a fit of laughter.

Manoah (hearing a shout some distance off).
Hark! What noise was that?

Samson. That?—What?—Oh nothing, but the shoutings of a multitude assembled here hard by. They were to meet this morning, and do sacrifice to Dagon. Let them shout, as much as they think proper, round their wooden god, while I pursue my melancholy story.—Disappointed in this manner, and yet mistress of her countenance, did the insidious Dalilah affect a deep concern at the idea that I loved her now no longer, and a new solicit to be told in what my strength consisted. I looked at her, and well pleased with finding she conceived my love worth so much trouble to obtain it (for how far will not an artful woman work

on

on those that listen to her), thought I should but ill requite her love, if I refused what she so earnestly intreated ; and resolved to gratify her : but imagined it would add to her enjoyment, if before hand she were twice or thrice, as she had been already, disappointed. Thus, dear father, did I wanton with the snake that was to sting me !

Manoah. With the snake indeed !

Samson. I told her therefore, if she bound me with new ropes I should be weak like other men. The traitress was industrious to get any thing she fancied necessary to betray me ; and provided therefore these new ropes : but they were scarce tied round me, when I burst them no less easily than I had done the withs ; and once again broke forth into a fit of laughter at this second disappointment, making merriment in this manner at the moment I was posting swift to ruin. She affected an increase of sorrow, taxed me with dissimulation in the fondness I alledged I bore her, and shed tears of well feigned anguish. This fresh proof of her affection charmed me, and I thought I would the sooner calm her agitated bosom, but not yet. " Well then," said I, " weave only the seven locks upon my head together with a pin, and then a child may master me." She did so, but I rose, and pulled

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the pin out, laughing, as before, at her simplicity that could believe me. Her affliction now became unbounded, and she fell upon my neck, embracing me, and saying, “ Dear, “ dear Samson ! What am I to think, but that “ you hate me ? Must I die in doubt of your “ affection ? Let me only know you love me, “ and then welcome death ; for I can after- “ ward expire with pleasure ; since my grave “ shall then be in your arms.”

Manoah. Abominable syren !

Samson. Her hypocrisy was now complete, and I completely wretched. I embraced her, crying out : “ Dear Dalilah ? how, how shall “ I be worthy of your love, which I have “ hitherto but tried ; and will [at length lay “ open my whole bosom. Know then, that “ a razor never yet has touched my head ; “ for from my childhood I have been a Naza- “ rite to God. If I were shaven, all my “ strength would leave me.” To convince her of this truth, “ Give me,” said I, “ a ra- “ zor.” It was brought, when my own hand performed the operation, and thus sun- dered me from God. What followed ? The Philistines, who had been attending many days to take me, were called in. I was unable to withstand them. They put out my eyes with red hot irons ; but alas ! not till such time as I had

I had seen the abandoned Dalilah hold out her hand before me to receive the purchase money of her unexampled treason.

Manoah. Heaven preserve me from such wretches in the mask of beauty!

Samson. This fell out at least twelve days ago. I did not think to send you word of my calamity, in hopes I might continue grinding here, till death released me, and you never know of my unhappy fortune: but God's providence has willed it otherwise. How can I stand before a father, having caused him so much grief?

Manoah. Think not of my distress, dear son. Your own must be a weight sufficient for you. I still hear the shouting Philistines: But we are interrupted.

The Goaler (re-entering). Pardon me, old man, the message I am come with.

Manoah. Pardon you! I pardon you! What mockery is this?

Goaler. It is, alas, no mockery, but the expression was suggested by my pity; and forgive me you too, Samson, whom I pity likewise. The Philistine lords, assembled in the house of Dagon, have sent messengers to take you thither, so that you may make them sport.

Manoah. May make them sport! And must this insult then be added to the weight of your affliction, and mine likewise?

Samson (after a pause). It must be so ; but—
(*feeling to draw near his father*) be of heart : a
beam of hope is kindled of a sudden in my
bosom ; for my sorrows will e'er long, I trust,
be over, and yourself give thanks to God that
I am happy. I would say, alas, a great deal
more, but must not.—Kiss my aged mother for
her poor dark son, and tell her I shed tears
of blood for all the misery I have caused her.
Stay, dear father, here, till I come back. If
I have leave, I will not fail, in that case, to re-
turn as soon as I am able : but if not, this
good man here (*pointing to the Goaler*), who,
though my goaler, has a pitying bosom, will
inform you I am hindered. This embrace, if
it be so then, is the last you will receive from
your unhappy son. Sit down : let me, though
blind, conduct you to a place.—There father,
lean against the pillar placed behind, and now
farewell.—Weep not in this wife for your son,
but weep for those he has himself, as you well
know, unjustly slain.—(*Aside*). Accept, oh
God, that death I am about to bring upon my-
self, as some atonement for those murders.—
(*To his father*). Once again farewell. Fare-
well ;—(*aside*) and, as my spirit whispers me,
farewell for ever.—(*Going, but returns*). I
would stay yet longer ; but my masters are im-
patient for their sport :—and sport, if I have
any.

any strength still left me, will I give them.—Once again farewell.—Oh father! father! (*He goes out with the Goaler*).

Manoah (*rising after long silence*). What will be the end of this day's business? and what meant he when he said ; *If I have leave, I will not fail, in that case, to return as soon as I am able ; but if not ?*—My mind shrinks back at the idea, and I know not why it should be so, but horrible imaginations overwhelm me. Yet what likelihood that any one in his sad situation, dark and feeble as he is, should compass *that*.—“Kiss,” did he say, “my aged mother for “her poor dark son.” Alas! when she shall hear they have thus treated him, what will not be her motherly complainings? There was some small consolation for her in the thought, that when the Philistines first seized upon him, they proceeded not to take away his life: yet, when I tell her they have put his eyes out, what will she not feel?—But I forget my own affliction to reflect on hers.—By this, is my unhappy son among the Philistines, and making them diversion. Yes, I hear their barbarous noise. Alas! they are rejoicing while we mourn ;—but sure, that shout I heard just now was not the voice of mirth. It was the howl of agony. It was, methought, as if an edifice were tumbling from its height! Hark!

do

do I hear it still? no, every thing is silent. Have the assembly then broke up, and is my son returning? No: but I discern his friendly Goaler coming. Sure, or my old eyes deceive me; he seems frightened, and in every region of his face sits consternation! Why does he come running thus? What can his hurry mean?

The Goaler (re-entering in a fright).— Oh horror! horror!

Manoah. What has happened?

Goaler. The Philistines and your son—

Manoah. My son, good friend! what of my son? and what of the Philistines?

Goaler. Are all dead and buried!

Manoah. Dead and buried! What my son and the Philistines!

Goaler. Yes, all overwhelmed, together with the temple.

Manoah. Heavens! What mean you?

Goaler. Hear me.—To this ruin he alluded, when departing he informed me he was glad his masters had sent for him to create them mirth; “for now,” said he, “that with my hair, which has been growing since the razor was applied thereto, I have a portion of my strength again, I shall be able to afford them such diversion as a faithful servant should, when so commanded by his masters.” I gave ear, but little dreamt of such

Such a scene as was to follow; for by this time, being brought into the temple, as I learnt of one that stood beside him and escaped (for I was stationed at the door without), they carried him directly to a corner of the building, near two pillars, that sustained the roof, yet not close by them: so that being wearied, as he said, with walking, he requested of the lad who held him by the hand, that he might feel the pillars, and support himself against them. He was not denied this favour; but no sooner had he reached the spot, than getting in between, he clasped them with both arms, and uttering something like a prayer, pulled every way. When lo! they shook, they yielded to the strength he had still left him; and * down came the roof, with upward of three thousand men and women on it, who all miserably perished; and, in falling, with the stones they sat on, crushed the multitude beneath them, who were no less numerous than the rest; and thus, old man, did your unhappy Samson, at his death, kill more than ever he had done

* Architects are not agreed what sort of building that could be, which, by removing thus two pillars, and those close together, would fall down. Perhaps, it was three cornered, having double pillars at each angle. This accounts for Samson's having undertaken such a task, with any prospect of succeeding in his aim, and likewise for the havock that ensued.

while

while living: but you seem as if you heard me not.

Manoah. Oh miserable me!

Goaler. What shall I do with him? My heart weeps blood to think what he must suffer; and my countrymen perhaps, if they should be informed that such a one is here, will come and tear him piece-meal in revenge for that distress his son has caused among them, by destroying such a number of their children, wives, and other kinsfolk. I must therefore take him off, that for the present he may lie concealed, till I can find some opportunity of sending him safe home. I have no time to lose. Lean on my arm, old man. Let me conduct you in.

Manoah. Do with me as you please.

Goaler. His sorrow does not render him unmanageable. I am glad of that. This way, good man.

Manoah. Oh Samson! oh my son!

END OF VOL. I.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM